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SOPHIA.

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S O P H I A.

C H A P. I.

The different characters of two sisters.

HARRIOT and Sophia were the daughters of a gentleman, who, having spent a good paternal inheritance before he was five and thirty, was reduced to live upon the moderate salary of a place at court, which his friends procured him to get rid of his importunities. The same imprudence by which he had been governed in affairs of less importance, directed him

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like.

likewise in the choice of a wife : the woman he married had no merit but beauty, and brought with her to the house of a man whose fortune was already ruined, nothing but a taste for luxury and expence, without the means of gratifying it.

Harriot, the eldest daughter of this couple, was, like her mother, a beauty, and upon that account, as well as the conformity of her temper and inclinations to hers, engrossed all her affection.

Sophia she affected to despise, because she wanted in an equal degree those personal attractions, which in her opinion constituted the whole of female perfection. Mere common judges, however, allowed her person to be agreeable ; people of discernment and taste pronounced her something more. There was diffused throughout the whole person of Sophia a certain secret charm, a natural

real grace which cannot be defined; she was not indeed so beautiful as her sister, but she was more attractive; her complexion was not so fair as Harriot's, nor her features so regular, but together they were full of charms: her eyes were particularly fine, large, and full of fire, but that fire tempered with a tenderness so bewitching, as insensibly made its way to the heart. Harriot had beauty, but Sophia had something more; she had graces.

One of the most beautiful fictions of Homer, says the celebrated *Montesquieu*, is that of the girdle which gave Venus the power of pleasing. Nothing is more proper to give us an idea of the magick and force of the graces, which seem to be given to a person, by some invifible power, and are distinguished from beauty itself.

Harriot's charms produced at the

B 2

first

first sight all the effect they were capable of; a second look of Sophia was more dangerous than the first, for grace is seldom found in the face than the manners; and, as our manner is formed every moment, a new surprise is perpetually creating. A woman can be beautiful but one way, she can be graceful a thousand.

Harriot was formed to be the admiration of the many; Sophia the passion of the few, the sweet sensibility of her countenance, the powerful expression of her eyes, the soft elegance of her shape and motion, a melodious voice, whose varied accents enforced the sensible things she always said, were beauties not capable of striking vulgar minds; and which were sure to be eclipsed by the dazzling lustre of her sister's complexion, and the fire of two bright eyes, whose looks were as quick and unsettled as her thoughts.

While

While Harriot was receiving the improvement of a polite education, Sophia was left to form herself as well as she could ; happily for her a just taste and solid judgment supplied the place of teachers, precept, and example. The hours that Harriot wasted in dress, company, and gay amusements, were by Sophia devoted to reading.

A good old gentleman, who was nearly related to her father, perceiving this taste in her, encouraged it by his praises, and furnished her with the means of gratifying it, by constantly supplying her with such books as were best calculated to improve her morals and understanding. His admiration encreasing in proportion as he had opportunities of observing her merit, he undertook to teach her the French and Italian languages, in which she soon made a surprising progress ; and by the time

she had reached her fifteenth year, she had read all the best authors in them, as well as in her own.

By this unwearied application to reading, her mind became a beautiful store-house of ideas: hence she derived the power and the habit of constant reflection, which at once enlarged her understanding, and confirmed her in the principles of piety and virtue.

As she grew older the management of the family entirely devolved upon her; for her mother had no taste for any thing but pleasure, and her sister was taught to consider herself as a fine lady, whose beauty could not fail to make her fortune, and whose sole care it ought to be to dress to the greatest advantage, and make her appearance in every place where she might encrease the number of her admirers.

Sophia, in acquitting herself of
the

the duties of a house-keeper to her mother, shewed that the highest intellectual improvements were not incompatible with the humbler cares of domestic life: every thing that went through her hands received a grace and propriety from the good sense by which she was directed; nor did her attention to family-affairs break in upon her darling amusement reading.

People who know how to employ their time well are good economists of it. Sophia laid out hers in such exact proportions, that she had always sufficient for the several employments she was engaged in: the business of her life, like that of nature, was performed without noise, hurry, or confusion.

The death of Mr. Darnley threw this little family into a deplorable state of indigence, which was felt the more severely, as they had hi-

therto lived in an affluence of all things, and the debts which an expence so ill proportioned to their income had obliged Mr. Darnley to contract, left the unhappy widow and her children without any resource. The plate, furniture, and every thing valuable were seized by the creditors. Mrs. Darnley and her daughters retired to a private lodging, where the first days were passed in weak despondence on the part of the mother, in passionate repinings on that of the eldest daughter, and by Sophia in decent sorrow and pious resignation.

Mrs. Darnley however, by a natural consequence of her thoughtless temper, soon recovered her former gaiety. Present evils only were capable of affecting her ; reflection and forecast never disturbed the settled calm of her mind. If the wants of one day were supplied, she did not
con-

consider what inconveniences the next might produce. As for Harriot she found resources of comfort in the exalted ideas she had of her own charms ; and having already laid it down as a maxim, that poverty was the most shameful thing in the world, she formed her resolutions accordingly.

Sophia, as soon as her grief for the loss of her father had subsided, began to consider of some plan for their future subsistence. She forbore however to communicate her thoughts on this subject to her mother and sister, who had always affected to treat every thing she said with contempt, the mean disguise which envy had assumed to hide their consciousness of her superior merit; but she opened her mind to the good old gentleman, to whom she had been obliged for many of her improvements. She told him that being by his generous

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care qualified to undertake the education of a young lady, she was desirous of being received into the family of some person of distinction in the quality of governess to the daughters of it, that she might at once secure to herself a decent establishment, and be enabled to assist her mother. She hinted that if her sister could be also prevailed upon to enter into the service of a lady of quality, they might jointly contribute their endeavours to make their mother's life comfortable.

Mr. Herbert praised her design, and promised to mention it to Mrs. Darnley, to whom he conceived he might speak with the greater freedom, as his near relation to her husband, and the long friendship which had subsisted between them, gave him a right to interest himself in their affairs. The first words he uttered produced such an emotion in
Mrs.

Mrs. Darnley's countenance, as convinced him that what he had farther to say would not be favourably received. She coloured, drew herself up with an air of dignity, looking at the same time at her eldest daughter with a scornful smile.

Mr. Herbert, however, continued his discourse, when Harriot, with a pertness which she took for wit, interrupted him by a loud laugh, and asked him, if going to service was the best provision he could think of for Mr. Darnley's daughters?

Mr. Herbert, turning hastily to her, replied with a look of great gravity, and in a calm accent, "Have
" you, miss, thought of any thing
" better?"

Harriot, without being disconcerted, retorted very briskly, "People
" who have nothing but advice to
" offer to their friends in distress,
- B 6 " ought

“ ought to be silent till they are asked for it.”

“ Good advice, Miss,” replied the old gentleman with the same composure, “ is what every body cannot, and many will not give ; and it is at least an instance of friendship to hazard it, where one may be almost sure of its giving offence.” But, continued he, turning to Sophia, “ my young pupil here has, I hope, not profited so little by her reading as to be ignorant of the value of good counsel ; and I promise her she shall not only command the best that I am capable of giving, but every other assistance she may stand in need of.” Saying this, he bowed and went away, without any attempts from Mrs. Darnley to detain him.

Poor Sophia, who was supposed by her silence to have acquiesced in the old gentleman’s proposal, was exposed

posed to a thousand reproaches for her meanness of spirit. She attempted to shew the utility, and even the necessity of following his advice; but she found on this occasion, as she had on many others, that with some persons it is not safe to be reasonable. Her arguments were answered with rage and invective, which soon silenced her, and increased the triumph of her imperious sister.

Mr. Herbert, apprehensive of the ill treatment she was likely to be exposed to, offered to place her in the family of a country clergyman, and to pay for her board till such a settlement as she desired could be procured for her; but the tender Sophia, not willing to leave her mother while she could be of any use to her, gratefully declined his offer, still expecting that the increasing perplexity of their circumstances might bring her to relish his reasonable

able counsels, and that she might have the sanction of her consent to a step which prudence made necessary to be taken.

A legacy of a hundred pounds being left her by a young lady who tenderly loved her, and who died in her arms, she immediately presented it to her mother, by whom it was received with a transport of joy, but without any reflection upon the filial piety of her who gave it.

Sophia's good friend, though he did not absolutely approve of this exalted strain of tenderness, yet did not fail to place the merit of it in the fullest light: but Harriot, who never heard any praises of her sister without a visible emotion, interrupted him, by saying, that Sophia had only done what she ought; and that she herself would have acted in the same manner, if the sum had been twenty times larger.

The

The same delicacy which induced Sophia to divest herself of any particular right to this small legacy, made her see the misapplication of it without discovering the least mark of dislike. Harriot, who governed her mother absolutely, having represented to her, that the obscurity in which they lived was not the means to preserve their old friends, or to acquire new ones, and that it was their business to appear again in the world, and put themselves in the way of fortune, which could not be done without making a decent appearance at least; Mrs. Darnley, who thought this reasoning unanswerable, consented to their changing their present lodgings for others more genteel, and to whatever expences her eldest daughter judged necessary to secure the success of her scheme.

Sophia lamented in secret this excess of imprudence; and to avoid being

ing a witness of it, as well as to free her mother from the expence of her maintenance, she resolved to accept of the first genteel place that offered; but the natural softness and timidity of her temper, made her delay as long as possible mentioning this design to her mother and sister, lest it should be construed into a tacit reproach of them for a conduct so very different.

Indeed her condition was greatly altered for the worse, since the present she had made of her legacy. Her mother and sister had never loved her with any great degree of affection, and their tenderness for her was now entirely lost in the uneasy consciousness of having owed an obligation to her, for which they could not resolve to be grateful. They no longer considered her as an insignificant person whose approbation or dislike was of no sort of consequence, but as a saucy
cen-

cenfurer of their actions, who affumed to herfelf a fuperiority, on account of the pauftry affiftance ſhe had afforded them : every thing ſhe ſaid was conſtrued into upbraidings of the benefit ſhe had conferred upon them. If ſhe offered her opinion upon any occaſion, Harriot would ſay to her with a malicious ſneer, “ To be ſure
“ you think you have a right to give
“ us laws, becauſe we have had the
“ miſfortune to be obliged to you.” And Mrs. Darnley, working herſelf up to an agony of grief and reſentment for the fancied insult, would lift up her eyes and cry, “ How
“ much is that mother to be pitied
“ who lives to receive alms from her
“ child !”

Poor Sophia uſed to answer no otherwiſe than by tears : but this was ſure to aggravate her fault ; for it was ſuppoſed that ſhe wept and appeared afflicted only to ſhew people

ple what ungrateful returns she met with for her goodness.

Thus did the unhappy Sophia, with the softest sensibility of heart, and tenderest affections, see herself excluded from the endearing testimonies of a mother's fondness, only by being too worthy of them, and exposed to shocking suspicions of undutifulness, for an action that shewed the highest filial affection: so true it is, that great virtues cannot be understood by mean and little minds, and with such, not only lose all their lustre, but are too often mistaken for the contrary vices.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

The Triumph of the Graces.

WHILE Sophia passed her time in melancholy reflections, Harriot, being by her generous gift enabled to make as shewy an appearance as her mourning habit would permit, again mixed in company, and laid baits for admiration. Her beauty soon procured her a great number of lovers; her poverty made their approaches easy; and the weakness of her understanding, her insipid gaiety, and pert affectation of wit, encouraged the most licentious hopes, and exposed her to the most impertinent addresses.

Among those who looking upon her as a conquest of no great difficulty formed the mortifying design of making a mistress of her, was Sir Charles

Charles Stanley, a young baronet of a large estate, a most agreeable person, and engaging address : his fine qualities made him the delight of all who knew him, and even envy itself allowed him to be a man of the strictest honour and unblemished integrity.

Persons who connect the idea of virtue and goodness with such a character, would find it hard to conceive how a man who lives in a constant course of dissimulation with one part of his species, and who abuses the advantages he has received from nature and fortune, in subduing chastity, and ensnaring innocence, can possibly deserve, and establish a reputation for honour ! but such are the illusions of prejudice, and such the tyranny of custom, that he who is called a man of gallantry, is at the same time esteemed a man of honour, though gallantry comprehends the

the worst kind of fraud, cruelty, and injustice.

Sir Charles Stanley had been but too successful in his attempts upon beauty, to fear being rejected by Miss Darnley; and knowing her situation, he resolved to engage her gratitude at least before he declared his designs. He had interest enough to procure the place her father enjoyed for a gentleman, who thought himself happy in obtaining it, though charged with an annuity of fourscore pounds a year for the widow of his predecessor.

Sir Charles, in acquainting Miss Darnley with what he had done in favour of her mother, found himself under no necessity of insinuating his motive for the extraordinary interest he took in the affairs of this distressed family. Harriot's vanity anticipated any declaration of this sort, and the thanks she gave him were accompanied

nied with such an apparent consciousness of the power of her charms, as convinced him his work was already more than half done.

He was now received at Mrs. Darnley's in the quality of a declared lover of Harriot; and although amidst all his assiduities he never mentioned marriage, either the mother and daughter did not penetrate into his real designs, or were but too much disposed to favour them.

The innocent heart of Sophia was at first overwhelmed with joy for the happy provision that had been made for her mother, and the prospect of such an advantageous match for her sister, when Mr. Herbert, who knew the world too well to be imposed upon by these fine appearances, gently hinted to his young favourite, his apprehensions of the baronet's dishonourable views.

Her delicacy was so shocked by
this

this suspicion, that she could scarce forbear expressing some little resentment of it ; but reflecting that this ardent lover of Harriot's had not yet made any proposals of marriage, her good sense immediately suggested to her, that such affected delays in a man who was absolutely independent, and with a woman whose situation made it a point of delicacy to be early explicit on that head, could only proceed from intentions which he had not yet dared to own.

Chance had so ordered it, that hitherto she had never seen Sir Charles Stanley ; whenever he came, she was either employed in the family affairs, or engaged with her books, which it was no easy matter to make her quit. Besides, as she had no share in his visits, and as her sister never shewed any inclination to introduce her to him, she thought it did not become her to intrude herself upon
his

his acquaintance. Sir Charles indeed, knowing that Mrs. Darnley had another daughter, used sometimes to enquire for her, but was neither surprised nor disappointed that she never appeared.

Sophia, however, was determined to be in the way when he came next, that she might have an opportunity of observing his behaviour to her sister; and fondly flattered herself that she should discover nothing to the disadvantage of a person, whom her grateful heart had taught itself to love and esteem as their common benefactor.

Sir Charles at the next visit found Sophia in the room with her sister. He instantly saw something in her looks and person which inspired him with more respect than he had been used to feel for Mrs. Darnley and Harriot; a dignity which she derived from innate virtue, and ex-
alted

alted understanding. Struck with that inexplicable charm in her countenance which made it impossible to look on her with indifference, he began to consider her with an attention which greatly disgusted Harriot, who could not conceive that where she was present any other object was worthy notice.

Sophia herself was a little disconcerted by the young baronet's so earnestly gazing on her ; and, in order to divert his looks, opened a conversation in which her sister might bear a part. Then it was, that without designing it, she displayed her whole power of charming : that flow of wit which was so natural to her, the elegant propriety of her language, the delicacy of her sentiments, the animated look which gave them new force, and sent them directly to the heart, and the moving graces of

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the

the most harmonious voice in the world, were attractions, which, though generally lost on fools, seldom fail of their effect on the heart of a man of sense.

Sir Charles was wrapt in wonder and delight; he had no eyes, no ears, but for Sophia: he scarce perceived that Harriot was in the room.

The insolent beauty, astonish'd at such unusual neglect, varied her attitude and her charms a thousand different ways to draw his attention; but found all was to no purpose. Had she been capable of serious reflection, she might now have discovered what advantages her sister, though inferior to her in beauty, gained over her, by the force of her understanding: she might now have seen,

“How beauty is excelled by *modest* grace,
“And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.”

But

But too ignorant to know her own wants, and too conceited to imagine she had any, she was strangely perplexed how to account for so sudden an alteration in Sir Charles.

Her uneasiness, however, grew so great, that she was not able to conceal it. She shifted her seat two or three times in a minute, bit her lips almost through, and frowned so intelligibly, that Sophia at last perceiving her agitation, suddenly recollected herself, and quitted the room upon pretence of business.

When she was gone, Harriot drawing herself up, and assuming a look which expressed her confidence in the irresistible power of her charms, seemed resolved to make her lover repent the little notice he had taken of her in this visit by playing off a thousand scornful airs upon him; but she

was more mortified than ever, when upon turning her eyes towards him, in full expectation of finding his fixed upon her, she saw them bent upon the ground, and such a pensiveness in his countenance, as all her rigors could never yet occasion.

She was considering what to say to him to draw him out of this reverie, when Sir Charles, on a sudden raising his eyes, turned them towards the door with a look of mingled anxiety and impatience, and then, as if disappointed, sighed and addressed some indifferent conversation to Harriot.

The lady, now quite provoked, had recourse to an artifice which her shallow understanding suggested to her, as an infallible method of awakening his tenderness, and this was to make him jealous. Without any preparation, therefore, she introduced

introduced the name of Lord L---, a young nobleman who was just returned from his travels, and lavishing a thousand encomiums upon his person, and his elegant taste in dress, added, " That he was the
" best bred man in the world, and
" had entertained her so agreeably
" one night at the play, when happening to come into a box where
" she was with a lady of her acquaintance, that they did not
" mind a word the players said, he
" was so diverting."

Sir Charles coldly answered,
" That Lord L--- was a very pretty
" youth, and that he was intimately
" acquainted with him."

" Oh then," cried Harriot, with a great deal of affected joy, " I
" vow and protest you shall bring
" him to see me."

" Indeed you must excuse me,
C 3 . " madam,"

“madam,” said Sir Charles with some quickness.

Harriot, concluding her stratagem had taken effect, was quite transported, and renewed her attacks, determined to make him suffer as much as possible; but the young baronet, whose thoughts were full of Sophia, and whose emotion at the request Harriot had made him, was occasioned by fears very different from those she suspected, took no further notice of what she said, but interrupted her to ask how old her sister Sophia was?

“I dare engage, replied Harriot, “you would never have supposed her to be younger than I am.”

The baronet smiled, and looking at his watch, seemed surprised that it was so late, and took his leave.

Miss Darnley following him to the door of the room, cried, “Remember I lay my commands upon
“on

“ on you to bring my Lord L--- to
“ see me.”

Sir Charles answered her no otherwise than by a low bow, and she returned, delighted at the parting pang which she supposed she had given him. Vanity is extremely ingenious in procuring gratifications for itself.

C 4 C H A P.

C H A P. III.

*The Young Baronet declares his
Passion.*

HARRIOT did not doubt but that she had tormented Sir Charles sufficiently; and it was the unshaken confidence which she had in the power of her charms, that hindered her from discovering the true cause of the new disgust she had conceived for her sister. However, it was so great that she could scarcely speak to her civilly, or endure her in her sight: yet she found an increase of pleasure in talking to her mother when she was present, of the violent passion Sir Charles Stanley had for her, and in giving an exaggerated account of the professions he made her.

Sophia

Sophia did not listen to this sort of discourse with her usual complaisance. Her mind became insensibly more disposed to suspect the sincerity of the baronet's passion for her sister: she grew pensive and melancholy, sought solitude more than ever, and loved reading less.

This change, which her own innocence hid from herself, was quickly perceived by Mr. Herbert, who loved her with a parent's fondness, and thought nothing indifferent which concerned her. He took occasion one day to mention Sir Charles Stanley to her, and asked her opinion of his person and understanding, keeping his eyes fixed upon her at the same time, which disconcerted her so much that she blushed; and though she commended him greatly, yet it was easy to discover that she forbore to

say all the good the thought of him, for fear of saying too much.

Mr. Herbert no longer doubted but this dangerous youth had made an impression on the innocent heart of Sophia, which was still ignorant of its own emotions.

He had perceived for some time that Sir Charles had changed the object of his pursuits: his visits now were always short, unless Sophia was in the way: he brought her all the new books and pamphlets that were published which were worth her reading: he adopted the purity and delicacy of her sentiments, declared himself always of the side she espoused: he talked of virtue like a man who loved and practised it, and set all his own good qualities in the fairest light: he presented Harriot from time to time with fashionable trifles, and sent Sophia books enough to furnish

nish out a little library, consisting of the best authors, in English, French, and Italian, all elegantly bound, with proper cases for their reception : he praised whatever she approved, and appeared to have great respect and consideration for Mr. Herbert, because he observed she loved and esteemed him.

That faithful friend of the virtuous Sophia trembled for her danger, when he considered that by this artful management the baronet was strengthening himself every day in her good opinion, and seducing her affections under the appearance of meriting her esteem ; yet he did not think it proper to give her even a hint of her situation. A young maid has passed over the first bounds of reservedness, who allows herself to think she is in love.

Mr. Herbert would not familiarize her with so dangerous an idea :
he

he knew her extreme modesty, her solid virtue; he was under no apprehensions that she would ever act unworthy of her character; but a heart so nicely sensible, so delicately tender as hers, he knew must suffer greatly from a disappointed passion; and this was what he wanted to prevent; not by wounding her delicacy with suggesting to her that she was in love, but by preserving her from the secret encroachments of that passion.

He reminded her of the design she had formerly mentioned to him of entering into the service of a lady, and was rejoiced to find that she still continued her resolution. Harriot's natural insolence and ill temper, irritated by the change she now plainly saw in Sir Charles, made home so disagreeable to Sophia, that she wished impatiently for an opportunity of providing for herself,

herself, that she might no longer live upon the bounty of her sister, who often insinuated that their mother's annuity was her gift.

Mr. Herbert, who had other reasons besides those urged, from freeing her from so uneasy a dependence, promised to be diligent in his enquiries for something that would suit her.

Neither Mrs. Darnley nor Harriot now opposed this design, which soon came to the knowledge of Sir Charles, who had bribed a servant of the family to give him intelligence of every thing that passed in it.

Impatient to prevent the execution of it, and tortured by the bare apprehension of Sophia's absence, he resolved to break through that constraint he had so long laid upon himself, and acquaint her with his passion.

But it was not easy to find an opportunity of speaking to her alone.

lone. At length having contrived to get Harriot engaged to a play, and prevailed upon a maiden kinswoman of his to invite Mrs. Darnley to a party at whist, he went to the house at his usual hour of visiting this little family, and found Sophia at home, and without any company.

Not all the confidence he derived from his rank and fortune, his fine understanding, and those personal graces which gave him but too much merit in the eyes of many women, could hinder him from trembling at the thought of that declaration he was about to make.

As soon as he came into Sophia's presence he was awed, disconcerted, and unable to speak ; such was the power of virtue, and such the force of a real passion ! Two or three times he resolved to begin ; but when he looked upon Sophia,
and

and saw in her charming eyes that sparkling intelligence which displayed the treasures of the soul that animated them; when he observed the sweet severity of her modest countenance, the composed dignity of her behaviour, he durst not own a passion which had views less pure than the perfect creature that inspired it.

His conversation for near an hour was so confused, so disjointed, and interrupted by such frequent musings, that Sophia was amazed, and thought it so disagreeable, and unlike what it used to be, that she was not sorry when he seemed disposed to put an end to his visit.

Sir Charles indeed rose up to be gone, but with so deep a concern in his eyes as increased Sophia's perplexity. She attended him respectfully to the door of the room, when he suddenly turning back,
and

and taking her hand, “ Do not
“ hate me, said he, nor think ill
“ of me, if I tell you that I love
“ and adore you.”

Sophia in the utmost confusion
at such a speech, disengaged her
hand from his, and retiring a few
steps back, bent her eyes on the
ground, and continued silent.

Sir Charles, emboldened by her
confusion, made a tender, and at
the same time, respectful declara-
tion of the passion he had long felt
for her.

Sophia, not willing to hear him
enlarge upon this subject, raised her
eyes from the ground ; her cheeks
were indeed overspread with blushes,
but there was a grave composure in
her looks that seemed a bad omen
to Sir Charles.

“ I have hitherto flattered myself,
“ fir, said she, that you entertain-
“ ed a favourable opinion of me;
“ how

“ how happens it then that I see
 “ myself to-day exposed to your
 “ raillery ?”

The baronet was beginning a thousand protestations, but Sophia stopt him short. “ If your professions to me are sincere, said she, what am I to think of those you made to my sister ?”

Sir Charles expected this retort, and was the less perplexed by it, as he needed only to follow the dictates of truth to form such an answer as was proper to be given. “ I acknowledge, said he, that I admired your sister, and her beauty made as strong an impression upon me, as mere beauty can make upon a man who has a taste for higher excellencies. I sought Miss Darnley’s acquaintance. I was so happy as to do her some little service. I wished to find in her those qualities that were
 “ necessary

“ necessary to fix my heart---Par-
“ don my freedom, Miss Sophia,
“ the occasion requires that I should
“ speak freely. Miss Darnley,
“ upon a nearer acquaintance, did
“ not answer the idea I had formed
“ to myself of a woman whom I
“ could love for life ; and the pro-
“ fessions I made her, as you are
“ pleased to call them, were no
“ more than expressions of gallan-
“ try ; a sort of homage which
“ beauty, even when it does not
“ touch the heart, exacts from the
“ tongue. My heart was not so
“ easy a conquest---tell me not of
“ raillery, when I declare that
“ none but yourself was ever capa-
“ ble of inspiring me with a real
“ passion.”

The arrival of Mr. Herbert proved a grateful interruption to Sophia, in whose innocent breast the tenderness and apparent sincerity

cerity of this declaration raised emotions which she knew not how to disguise.

Sir Charles, though grieved at this unseasonable visit, yet withdrew, not wholly despairing of success. He had heedfully observed the changes in Sophia's face while he was speaking, and thought he had reason to hope that he was not indifferent to her. Loving her as he did with excessive tenderness, what pure and unmixed satisfaction would this thought have given him, had he not been conscious that his designs were unworthy of her! The secret upbraidings of his conscience disquieted him amidst all his flattering hopes of success; but custom, prejudice, the insolence of fortune, and the force of example, all conspired to suppress the pleadings of honour and justice in favour of the amiable Sophia.

Sophia, and fixed him in the barbarous resolution of attempting to corrupt that virtue which made her so worthy of his love.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

In which Harriot makes a very contemptible Figure.

MR. Herbert having, as has been already mentioned, interrupted the conversation between Sir Charles and Sophia, was not surpris'd at the young baronet's abrupt departure, as he seem'd preparing to go when he came in ; but upon looking at Sophia, he perceived so many signs of confusion and perplexity in her countenance, that he did not doubt but the discourse which his entrance had put an end to, had been a very interesting one. He waited a moment, in expectation that she would open herself to him ; but finding that she continued silent and abash'd, he gently took her hand, and looking tenderly

tenderly upon her, “ Tell me, my
“ child, said he, has not something
“ extraordinary happened, which
“ occasions this confusion I see you
“ in ?”

“ Sir Charles has indeed been
“ talking to me, replied Sophia
“ blushing, in a very extraordinary
“ manner, and such as I little ex-
“ pected.”

Mr. Herbert pressed her to explain herself, and she gave him an exact account of Sir Charles’s discourse to her, without losing a word ; so faithful had her memory been to all he had said.

Mr. Herbert listened to her attentively, and found something so like candor and sincerity in the baronet’s declaration, that he could not help being pleased with it. He had never indeed judged favourably of his views upon Harriot, but here the case was very different.

Har-

Harriot's ignorance, vanity, and eager desire of being admired, exposed her to the attacks of libertinism, and excited presumptuous hopes.

Sophia's good sense, modesty, and virtue, placed her out of the reach of temptation. No one could think it surprising that a man of sense should make the fortune of a woman who would do honour to his choice, and where there was such exalted merit as in Sophia, overlook the disparity of circumstances.

But justly might it be called infatuation and folly, to raise to rank and affluence a woman of Harriot's despicable turn; to make a companion for life of a handsome idiot, who thought the highest excellencies of the female character were to know how to dress, to dance, to sing, to flutter in a drawing-room,

room, or coquet at a play; who mistook pertness for wit, confidence for knowledge, and insolence for dignity.

While he was revolving these thoughts in his mind, Sophia looked earnestly at him, pleased to observe that what the baronet had said seemed worthy his consideration.

Mr. Herbert, who read in her looks that she wished to have his advice on this occasion, but would not ask it, lest she should seem to lay any stress upon Sir Charles's declaration, told her it was very possible the baronet was sincere in what he had said to her; that his manner of accounting for his quitting her sister, was both sensible and candid; that she ought not to be surprised at the preference he gave her over Miss Darnley, since she deserved it by the care she had taken
to

to improve her mind, and to acquire qualities which might procure the esteem of all wise and virtuous persons.

He warned her, however, not to trust too much to favourable appearances, nor to suffer her inclinations to be so far engaged by the agreeable person and specious behaviour of Sir Charles Stanley, as to find it painful to renounce him, if he should hereafter shew himself unworthy of her good opinion.

He advised her, when he talked to her in the same strain again, to refer him to her mother and to him for an answer; and told her that he would save her the confusion and perplexity of acquainting her mother and sister with what had happened, by taking that task upon himself.

“ You will, no doubt, added he, be exposed to some fallies of ill

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“ tem-

“ temper from Miss Darnley, for
“ robbing her of a lover ; for envy is
“ more irreconcilable than hatred :
“ but let not your sensibility suffer
“ much on her account ; if you de-
“ prive her of a lover, you do not
“ deprive her of one she loves : she
“ is too vain, too volatile, and too
“ greedy of general admiration, to
“ be affected with the loss of Sir
“ Charles, any farther than as her
“ pride is wounded by it : and one
“ would imagine she had foreseen
“ this desertion by the pains she
“ has taken about a new conquest
“ lately.”

Mr. Herbert was going on, when Mrs. Darnley knocked at the door. Sophia in extreme agitation, begged him to say nothing concerning Sir Charles that evening. He promised her he would not, and they all three conversed together upon indifferent things,

things, until Harriot returned from the play.

Mr. Herbert then took leave of them, after inviting himself to breakfast the next morning; which threw Sophia into such terror and confusion, that she retired hastily to her own room to conceal her disorder.

Mr. Herbert came the next morning, according to his promise; and Sophia all trembling with her apprehensions retiring immediately after breakfast, he entered upon the business that had brought him thither; but sensible that what he had to say would prove extremely mortifying to miss Harriot, he thought it not amiss to sweeten the bitter bill he was preparing for her, by sacrificing a little flattery to her pride.

“ You fine ladies, said he, ad-
“ dressing himself to her with a
“ smile, are never weary of extend-
D 2 “ ing

“ ing your conquests ; but you use
“ your power with so much tyr-
“ ranny that it is not surprising
“ some of your slaves should as-
“ sume courage at last, to break
“ your chains. Do you know,
“ my pretty cousin, that you have
“ lost Sir Charles Stanley ; and that
“ he has offered that heart which
“ you no doubt have despised, to
“ your sister Sophia ?”

Miss Darnley, who had bridled up at the beginning of this speech, lost all her assumed dignity towards the end of it : her face grew pale and red by turns ; she fixed her eyes on the ground, her bosom heaved with the violence of her agitations, and tears, in spite of her, were ready to force their way.

Sir Charles had indeed for a long time discontinued his addresses to her, and had suffered his inclination for her sister to appear plainly enough ;

enough; but still her vanity suggested to her that this might be all a feint, and acted only with a view to alarm her fears, and oblige her to sacrifice all her other admirers to him.

What Mr. Herbert had said therefore, struck her at first with astonishment and grief; but solicitous to maintain the fancied superiority of her character, she endeavoured to repress her emotions; and taking the hint which he had designedly thrown out to her to save her confusion.

“ Sir Charles has acted very
“ wisely, said she, putting on a
“ scornful look, to quit me who al-
“ ways despised him, for one who
“ has been so little used to have
“ lovers, that she will be ready to
“ run mad with joy at the thoughts
“ of such a conquest; but, after
“ all, she has only my leavings.”

D 3

Mr.

Mr. Herbert, though a little shocked at the grossness of her language, replied gravely, "However that may be, Miss, it is certain that he has made a very open, and to all appearance, sincere declaration of love to Miss Sophia, who not knowing how to mention this affair to her mother herself, commissioned me to acquaint her with it, that she may have directions how to behave to Sir Charles, and what to say to him."

"One would have imagined, interrupted Miss Darnley eagerly, that she who sets up for so much wit, and reads so many books, might have known what to say to him."

"Pray, Miss, said Mr. Herbert, what would you have had her say to Sir Charles?"

"Why,

“ Why truly, replied she, I
“ think she ought to have told him
“ that he was very impertinent, and
“ have shewn him the door.”

“ Sure, Harriot, said Mrs. Darn-
“ ley, who had been silent all this
“ time, You forget that Sir Charles
“ is our benefactor, and that I am
“ obliged to him for all the little
“ support I have.”

“ It is not likely I should forget
“ it, retorted Miss Darnley, since
“ I am the person who am most
“ obliged to him for what he has
“ done; if I mistake not, it was
“ upon my account that he in-
“ terested himself in our affairs.”

“ Well, well, Harriot, replied
“ Mrs. Darnley, I have been told
“ this often enough; but why
“ should you be angry at this prof-
“ pect of your sister's advance-
“ ment?”

D 4

I angry

“ I angry at her advancement,
“ madam! exclaimed Miss Har-
“ riot, not I really: I wish the
“ girl was provided for by a suita-
“ ble match with all my heart;
“ but as for Sir Charles, I would
“ not have her set her foolish heart
“ upon him; he is only laughing
“ at her.”

“ It may be so, said Mr. Her-
“ bert, though I think Miss Sophia
“ the last woman in the world
“ whom a man would chuse to
“ laugh at. However, this affair
“ is worth a little consideration---
“ Miss Sophia, madam, pursued
“ he, addressing himself to Mrs.
“ Darnley, intends to refer Sir
“ Charles entirely to you. You
“ will be the best judge whether
“ the passion he professes is sincere,
“ and his intentions honourable;
“ and I can answer for my young
“ cousin, that she will be wholly
“ governed

“ governed by your advice, since it
“ is impossible that you can give
“ her any but what is most advan-
“ tageous to her honour and hap-
“ piness.”

Harriot, no longer able to suppress her rage and envy, was thrown so far off her guard as to burst into tears. “ I cannot bear to be thus
“ insulted, cried she ; and I declare
“ if Sir Charles is permitted to go
“ on with his foolery with that vain
“ girl, I will quit the house.”

“ Was there ever any one so un-
“ reasonable as you are, Miss, said
“ Mr. Herbert; have you not owned
“ that you despised Sir Charles; and
“ if your sister is a vain girl, will
“ she not be sufficiently mortified
“ by accepting your leavings, as
“ you said just now ?”

“ I am speaking to my mother,
“ sir, replied Harriot, with a con-
“ temptuous frown ; depend upon

“ it, Madam, pursued she, that I
“ will not stay to be sacrificed to
“ Mr. Herbert’s favourite---either
“ she shall be forbid to give Sir
“ Charles any encouragement, who
“ after all, is only laughing at her,
“ or I will leave the house.”

Saying this, she flung out of the room, leaving her mother divided between anger and grief, and Mr. Herbert motionless with astonishment.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

Sir Charles, by a proper Degree of Address and Assurance, extricates himself from a very pressing difficulty.

MR. Herbert having recovered from the astonishment into which he had been thrown by the strange behaviour of Miss Darnley, endeavoured to comfort her mother, whose weak mind was more disposed to be alarmed at the threat she had uttered upon her quitting the room, than to resent such an insult to parental tenderness.

After gently insinuating to her, that she ought to reduce her eldest daughter to reason, by a proper exertion of her authority, he earnestly recommended to her to be particularly attentive to an affair which

D 6

concerned

concerned the happiness of her youngest child, from whose piety and good sense she might promise herself so much comfort.

He advised her to give Sir Charles Stanley an opportunity of explaining himself to her as soon as possible; and to make him comprehend, that he must not hope for permission to pay his addresses to Sophia, till he had satisfied her that his intentions were such, as she ought to approve.

Mrs. Darnley appeared so docile and complaisant upon this occasion, so ready to take advice, and so fully determined to be directed by it, that Mr. Herbert went away extremely well satisfied with her behaviour, and full of pleasing hopes for his beloved Sophia.

Harriot, in the mean time, was tormenting her sister above stairs :
she

she had entered her room with a heart full of bitterness, and a countenance inflamed with rage, throwing the door after her with such violence, that Sophia letting fall her book, started up in great terror, and, in a trembling accent, asked what was the matter with her?

Her own apprehensions had indeed already suggested to her the cause of the disorder she appeared to be in, which it was not easy to discover, in that torrent of reproach and invective with which she strove to overwhelm her. Scornful and unjust reflections upon her person, bitter jests upon her pedantic affectation, and malignant insinuations of hypocrisy, were all thrown out with the utmost incoherence of passion; to which Sophia answered no otherwise than by a provoking serenity of countenance, and the most calm attention.

That

That she was able to bear with such moderation the cruel insults of her sister, was not more the effect of her natural sweetness of temper, than her good sense and delicate turn of mind. The upper region of the air, says a sensible French writer, admits neither clouds nor tempests; the thunder, storms, and meteors, are formed below; such is the difference between a mean, and an exalted understanding.

Harriot, who did not find her account in this behaviour, sought to rouse her rage by reproaches still more severe, till having ineffectually railed herself out of breath, she awkwardly imitated her sister's composure, folded her hands before her, and seating herself, asked her in a low but solemn tone of voice, whether she would deign to answer her one plain question?

Sophia

Sophia then resuming her seat, told her with a look of mingled dignity and sweetness, that she was ready to answer her any question, and give her any satisfaction she could desire, provided she would repress those indecent transports of anger, so unbecoming her sex and years.

“Why, you little envious creature,” said Harriot, “you do not surely, because you are two or three years younger than I am, pretend to insinuate that I am old?”

“No certainly,” replied Sophia, half smiling; “my meaning is, that you are too young to adopt, as you do, all the peevishness of old age; but your question, sister,” pursued she---

“Well then,” said Harriot, “I ask you, how you have dared to say that Sir Charles Stanley was
“tired

“tired of me, and preferred you to me?”

“Tired of you!” repeated Sophia, shocked at her coarseness and falshood, “I never was capable of making use of such an expression, nor do I familiarize myself with ideas that need such strange language to convey them.”

Harriot, provoked almost to frenzy by this hint, which her indiscreet conduct made but too just, flew down stairs to her mother, and with mingled sobs and exclamations, told her, that Sophia had treated her like an infamous creature, who had dishonoured herself and her family.

Mrs. Darnley, though more favourably disposed towards her youngest daughter, since she had been made acquainted with the baronet's affection for her, yet was on this occasion governed by her habitual preference

preference of Harriot; and sending for Sophia, she reproved her with great asperity for her insolent behaviour to her sister.

Sophia listened with reverence to her mother's reproofs; and after justifying herself, as she easily might, from the accusation her sister had brought against her, she added, that not being willing to be exposed to any farther persecutions on account of Sir Charles Stanley, whose sincerity she thought very doubtful, she was resolved not to wait any longer for a place, such as Mr. Herbert's tenderness was in search of for her, but to accept the first reputable one that offered.

"I have not the vanity, madam," pursued she, "to imagine that a
"man of rank and fortune can
"seriously resolve to marry an in-
"digent young woman like me;
"and although I am humble en-
"ough

“ nough to go to service, I am too
“ proud to listen to the addresses of
“ any man who, from his supe-
“ riority of fortune, thinks he has
“ a right to keep me in doubt of
“ his intentions, or, in a mean de-
“ pendance upon a resolution which
“ he has not perhaps regard enough
“ for me to make.”

This discourse was not all relish-
ed by Mrs. Darnley, who conceived
that many inconveniencies were to
be submitted to, for the enjoyment
of affluence and pleasure; but So-
phia, who had revolved in her mind
all the mortifications a young wo-
man is exposed to, whose poverty
places her so greatly below her lo-
ver; that she is to consider his pro-
fessions as an honour, and be re-
joiced at every indication of his
sincerity; her delicacy was so much
wounded by the bare apprehension
of suffering what she thought an
in-

indignity to her sex, that she was determined to give Sir Charles Stanley no encouragement, but to pursue her first design of seeking a decent establishment, suitable to the depressed state of her fortune.

Mrs. Darnley, however, combatted her resolution with arguments which she supposed absolutely conclusive; and added to them her commands not to think any more of so humiliating a design, which so offended Harriot, that she broke out again into tears, exclamations, and reproaches.

Her mother would have found it a difficult task to have pacified her, had not a message from a lady, inviting her to a concert that evening, obliged her to calm her mind, that her complexion might not suffer from those emotions of rage which she had hitherto taken no pains to repress.

As

As soon as Harriet retired, to begin the labours of the toilet, Mrs. Darnley, with great mildness, represented to Sophia, that it was her duty to improve the affection Sir Charles expressed for her, since by that means it might be in her power to make her mother and her sister easy in their circumstances, and engage their love for ever.

This was attacking Sophia on her weak side; she answered with the softest tenderness of look and accent, "That it was her highest ambition to make them happy." "Then I do not doubt, my child," said Mrs. Darnley, "but you will employ all your good sense to secure the conquest you have made."

Sophia, melted almost to tears by these tender expressions, to which she had been so little used, assured her mother she would upon this
oc-

occasion act in such a manner as to deserve her kindness.

Mrs. Darnley would have been better pleased if she had been less reserved, and had appeared more affected with the fine prospect that was opening for her; but it was not possible to press her farther. Nature here had transferred the parent's rights to the child; and the gay, imprudent, ambitious mother, stood awed and abashed in the presence of her worthier daughter.

Sophia, who expected Sir Charles would renew his visit in the evening, past the rest of the day in uneasy perturbations. He entered the house just at the time that Harriot, who had ordered a chair to be got for her, came fluttering down the stairs in full dress. As soon as she perceived him, her cheeks glow-
ed with resentment; but affecting a careless inattention, she shot by him,
with

with a half courtesy, and made towards the door : he followed, and accosting her with a grave but respectful air, desired she would permit him to lead her to her chair. Harriot, conveying all the scorn into her face which the expression of her pretty but unmeaning features were capable of, and rudely drawing away her hand, " Pray, Sir," said she, " carry your *devores* where " they will be more acceptable ; " I am not disposed to be jested " with any longer."

Sir Charles, half-smiling, and bowing low, told her, that he respected her too much, as well upon her own account as upon Miss Sophia's, for whom indeed he had the most tender regard, to be guilty of the impertinence she accused him of.

Harriot did not stay to hear more : offended in the highest degree at
the

the manner in which he mentioned Sophia, she darted an angry look at him, and flung herself into her chair.

It must be confessed that Sir Charles discovered upon this occasion a great share of that easy confidence which people are apt to derive from splendid fortunes and undisputed rank; but as he wanted neither good sense, generosity, nor even delicacy, he would have found it difficult to own to a lady whom he had been used to address in the style of a lover, that his heart had received a new impression, if the contemptible character of Harriot had not authorized his desertion of her. Pride, ignorance, folly, and affectation, sink a woman so low in the eyes of men, that they easily dispense with themselves from a strict observance of those delicate attentions, and respectful regards, which

which the sex in general claim by the laws of politeness, but which sense and discernment never pay to the trifling part of it.

Sir Charles was likewise glad of an opportunity to shew Miss Darnley, that he did not think the little gallantry which had passed between them, entitled her to make him any reproaches ; or to consider the passion he professed for her sister as an infidelity to her ; and now finding himself more at ease from the frank acknowledgement he had made, he sent up his name, and was received by Mrs. Darnley with all the officious civility she was used to shew him.

Sophia was in the room, and rose up at his entrance in a sweet confusion, which she endeavoured to conceal, by appearing extremely busy at a piece of needle-work.

Sir Charles, after some trifling
conver-

conversation with her mother, approached her, and complimented her with an easy air upon her being so usefully employed, when most other young ladies were abroad in search of amusement.

Sophia, who was now a little recovered, answered him with that wit and vivacity which was so natural to her; but looking up at the same time, she saw his eyes fixed upon her with a look so tender and passionate, as threw her back into all her former confusion, which increased every moment by the consciousness that it was plain to his observation.

The young baronet, though he was charmed with her amiable modesty, yet endeavoured to relieve the concern he saw her under, by talking of indifferent matters, till Mrs. Darnley seeing them engaged in discourse, prudently withdrew;

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when

when he instantly addressed her in language more tender and particular.

Sophia, shocked at her mother's indiscretion, and at his taking advantage of it so abruptly, let all the weight of her resentment fall on him ; and the poor lover was so awed by her frowns, and the sarcastic raillery which she mingled with expressions that shewed the most invincible indifference, that not daring to continue a discourse which offended her, and in too great concern to introduce another subject, he stood fixed in silence for several minutes, leaning on the back of her chair, while she plied her needle with the most earnest attention, and felt her confusion decrease in proportion as his became more apparent.

At length he walked slowly to the other end of the room, and
taking

taking up a new book which he had sent her a few days before, he asked her opinion of it in a faltering accent ; and was extremely mortified to find she was so much at ease, as to answer him with all the readiness of wit and clearness of judgment imaginable.

Another pause of silence ensued, during which Sophia heard him sigh softly several times, while he turned over the leaves of the book with such rapidity as shewed he scarce read a single line in any page of it.

He was thus employed when Mrs. Darnley returned, who stood staring first at one, then at the other, strangely perplexed at their looks and silence, and apprehensive that all was not right. Sophia now took an opportunity to retire, and met an angry glance

E 2

from

from her mother as she passed by her.

Her departure roused Sir Charles out of his revery, he looked after her, and then turning to Mrs. Darnley, overcame his discontent so far as to be able to entertain her a quarter of an hour with his usual politeness; and finding Sophia did not appear again he took his leave.

As soon as he was gone Mrs. Darnley called her daughter, and chid her severely for her rudeness in leaving the baronet.

Sophia defended herself as well as she could, without owning the true cause of her disgust, which was her mother's so officiously quitting the room; but Mrs. Darnley was so ill satisfied with her behaviour, that she complained of it to her friend
Mr.

Mr. Herbert, who came in soon afterwards, telling him that Sophia's pride and ill temper would be the ruin of her fortune.

The good man having heard the story but one way, thought Sophia a little to blame, till having an opportunity to discourse with her freely, he found the fault she had been charged with was no more than an excess of delicacy, which was very pardonable in her situation: he warned her, however, not to admit too readily apprehensions injurious to herself, which was in some degree debasing the dignity of her sex and character; but to make the baronet comprehend that esteeming him as a man of honour, she considered his professions of regard to her as a claim upon her gratitude; and that, in con-

E 3

sequence

sequence, she should without any reluctance receive the commands of her mother, and the advice of her friends in his favour.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

Sophia entertains Hopes, and becomes more unhappy.

POOOR Sophia found herself but too well disposed to think favourably of Sir Charles ; her tenderness had suffered greatly by the force she had put upon herself to behave to him in so disobliging a manner, and the uneasiness she saw him under, his silence, and confusion, and the sighs that escaped him, apparently without design, had affected her sensibly, and several days passing away without his appearing again, she concluded he was irrecoverably prejudiced against her ; the uneasiness this thought gave her, first hinted to herself the impression he had already made on her heart,

E 4

Sir

Sir Charles indeed has been so much piqued by her behaviour as to form the resolution of seeing her no more; but when he supposed himself most capable of persisting in this resolution, he was nearest breaking through it, and suddenly yielding to the impulse of his tenderness, he flew to her again more passionate than ever; this little absence having only served to shew him how necessary she was to his happiness. When Sophia saw him enter the room, the agitations of her mind might be easily read in her artless countenance; a sentiment of joy for his return gave new fire to her eyes, and vivacity to her whole person; while a consciousness of the effect his presence produced, and a painful doubt of his sincerity, and the rectitude of his intentions, alternately dyed her cheeks with blushes and paleness.

The

The young baronet approached her trembling ; but the unexpected softness with which she received him, increasing at once his passion and his hopes, he poured out his whole soul in the tenderest and most ardent professions of love, esteem, and admiration of her.

Sophia listened to him with a complaisant attention ; and having had sufficient time, while he was speaking, to compose and recollect herself, she told him in a modest but firm accent, that she was obliged to him for the favourable opinion he entertained of her ; but that she did not think herself at liberty to hear, much less to answer to such discourse as he had thought proper to address to her, till she had the sanction of her mother's consent, and Mr. Herbert's approbation, whose truly parental regard

E 5

for

for her, made her look upon him as another father, who supplied the place of him she had lost.

Sir Charles, more charmed with her than ever, was ready in his present flow of tender sentiments for her, to offer her his hand with an unreservedness that would have satisfied all her delicate scruples ; but carried away by the force of habit, an insurmountable aversion to marriage, and the false but strongly impressed notion of refinements in an union of hearts, where love was the only tye, he could not resolve to give her a proof of his affection, which in his opinion was the likeliest way to destroy all the ardor of it ; but careful not to alarm her, and apprehending no great severity of morals from the gay interested mother, he politely thanked her for the liberty she gave him

him to make his passion known to Mrs. Darnley, and to solicit her consent to his happiness.

Sophia observed with some concern, that he affected to take no notice of Mr. Herbert upon this occasion ; but she would not allow herself to dwell long upon a thought so capable of raising doubts injurious to his honour ; and satisfied with the frankness of his proceeding thus far, she suffered no marks of discontent or apprehension to appear in her countenance and behaviour.

Sir Charles did not fail to make such a general declaration of his sentiments to Mrs. Darnley as he thought sufficient to satisfy Sophia, without obliging himself to be more explicit ; and in the mean time, having acquired a thorough knowledge of Mrs. Darnley's character, he sought to engage her in his in-

terest by a boundless liberality, and by gratifying all those passions which make corruption easy. She loved dissipation ; and all the pleasures and amusements that inventive luxury had found out to vary the short scene of life were at her command ; she had a high taste for the pleasures of the table, and therefore the most expensive wines, and choicest delicacies that earth, sea, and air could afford, were constantly supplied by him in the greatest profusion. No day ever passed without her receiving some considerable present, the value of which was enhanced by the delicacy with which it was made.

The innocent Sophia construed all this munificence into proofs of the sincerity of his affection for her ; for the young baronet, whether awed by the dignity of her virtue, or that he judged it necessary

sary

sary to secure the success of his designs, mingled with the ardor of his professions a behaviour so respectful and delicate, as removed all her apprehensions, and left her whole soul free to all the tender impressions a lively gratitude could make on it.

Mr. Herbert, however, easily penetrated into Sir Charles's views; he saw with pain the progress he made every day in the affection of Sophia; but, by the speciousness of his conduct, he had established himself so firmly in her good opinion, that he judged any attempt to alarm her fears, while there seemed so little foundation for them, would miss its effect; and not doubting but ere it was long her own observation would furnish her with some cause for apprehension, he contented himself for the present with keeping a vigilant eye
upon

upon the conduct of Sir Charles and Mrs. Darnley, and with being ready to assist Sophia in her perplexities, whenever she had recourse to him.

The change there was now in the situation of this amiable girl, afforded him many opportunities of admiring the excellence of her character : she who formerly used to be treated with neglect and even harshness by her mother, was now distinguished with peculiar regard ; her opinion always submitted to with deference, her inclinations consulted in all things, and a studious endeavour to please her was to be seen in every word and action of Mrs. Darnley's, who affected to be as partially fond of her as she had once been of her sister.

Even the haughty insolent Harriot, keeping her rage and envy concealed

ceased in her own breast, condescended to wear the appearance of kindness to her, while she shared with her mother in all those gratifications which the lavish generosity of Sir Charles procured them, and which Sophia, still continuing her usual simplicity of life, could never be persuaded to partake of. Yet all this produced no alteration in Sophia; the same modesty and humility, the same sweetness of temper, and attention to oblige, distinguished her now as in her days of oppression.

Mr. Herbert contemplated her with admiration and delight, and often with astonishment reflected upon the infatuation of Sir Charles, who could allow himself to be so far governed by fashionable prejudices, and a libertine turn of mind, as to balance one moment whether he should give himself a lawful claim

claim to the affections of such a woman.

Affairs continued in this state during three months, when the good old man, who watched over his young favourite with all the pious sollicitude of her guardian angel, perceived that she was grown more melancholy and reserved than usual ; he often heard her sigh, and fancied she had been weeping, and her fine eyes would appear sometimes suffused with tears, even when she endeavoured to appear most chearful.

He imagined that she had something upon her mind which she wished to disclose to him ; her looks seemed to intimate as much, and she frequently sought opportunities of being alone with him, and engaged him to pass those evenings with her, when her mother and sister were at any of the public entertainments.

tertainments. Yet all those times, though her heart seemed labouring with some secret uneasiness which she would fain impart to him, she had not resolution enough to enter into any explanation.

Mr. Herbert, who could have wished she had been more communicative, resolved at length to spare her any farther struggles with herself; and one day when he was alone with her, taking occasion to observe that she was not so chearful as usual, he asked her tenderly if any thing had happened to give her uneasiness; "Speak freely my child," said he to her, "and think you are speaking to a father."

Sophia made no other answer at first than by bursting into tears, which seeming to relieve her a little, she raised her head, and looking upon the good man, who beheld her with a fixed attention,

"May

“ May I hope, sir,” said she, “ that
“ you are still disposed to fulfil the
“ kind promise you once made me.
“ ---Oh take me from hence,” pur-
sued she, relapsing into a new passion
of tears, “ place me in the situation
“ to which my humble lot has
“ called me ; save me from the
“ weakness of my own heart---I
“ now see plainly the delusion into
“ which I have fallen ; but, alas !
“ my mother does not see it---
“ everything here conspires against
“ my peace.”

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

Sophia takes a very extraordinary resolution. Mr. Herbert encourages her in it.

SOPHIA, as if afraid she had said too much, stopped abruptly, and, fixing her eyes on the ground, continued silent, and lost in thought.

Mr. Herbert, who had well considered the purport of her words, passed over what he thought would give her too much pain to be explicit upon, and answered in great concern, "Then my fears are true!" "Sir Charles is not disposed to act like a man of honour."

A sudden blush glowed in the cheeks of Sophia at the mention of Sir Charles's name; but it was not a blush of softness and confusion.

Anger

Anger and disdain took the place of that sweet complacency, which was the usual expression of her countenance, and with a voice somewhat raised, she replied eagerly,

“ Sir Charles I believe has deceived me ; but him I can despise---Yet do not imagine, Sir, that he has dared to insult me by any unworthy proposals: if he has any unjustifiable views upon me, he has not had presumption enough to make me acquainted with them, otherwise than by neglecting to convince me that they are honourable ; but he practises upon the easy credulity of my mother. He lays snares for her gratitude by an interested generosity, as I now too plainly perceive ; and he has the art to make her so much his friend, that she will not listen to any thing

“ thing I say, which implies the
“ least doubt of his honour.”

Mr. Herbert sighed, and cast down
his eyes. Sophia continued in great
emotion : “ It is impossible for me;
“ Sir, to make you comprehend all
“ the difficulties of my situation:
“ A man who takes every form to
“ ensnare my affections, but none
“ to convince my judgment, impor-
“ tunes me continually with decla-
“ rations of tenderness, and com-
“ plaints of my coldness and indif-
“ ference : what can I do ? what
“ ought I to answer to such dis-
“ course ? In this perplexity, why
“ will not my mother come to my
“ assistance ? her years, her autho-
“ rity as a parent, give her a right
“ to require such an explanation
“ from Sir Charles as may free me
“ from doubts, which although
“ reason suggests, delicacy permits
“ me

“ me not to make appear ; but
“ such is my misfortune, that I
“ cannot persuade my mother there
“ is the least foundation for my
“ fears. She is obstinate in her
“ good opinion of Sir Charles ; and
“ I am reduced to the sad necessity
“ of either acting in open contra-
“ diction to her sentiments and
“ commands, or of continuing in a
“ state of humiliating suspense, to
“ which my character must at last
“ fall a sacrifice.”

“ That, my dear child,” inter-
rupted Mr. Herbert, “ is a point
“ which ought to be considered.
“ I would not mention it to you
“ first ; but since your own good
“ sense has led the way to it, I will
“ frankly own that I am afraid ;
“ innocent and good as you are,
“ the censures of the world will
“ not spare you, if you continue to
“ receive Sir Charles’s visits, doubt-
“ ful

“ful as his intentions now appear
“to every one: I know Mrs.
“Darnley judges of the sincerity
“of his professions to you, by the
“generosity he has shewn in the
“presents he has heaped upon her:
“---but, my dear child, that ge-
“nerosity was always suspected by
“me.”

“I confess,” said Sophia, blush-
ing, “I once thought favourably
“of him, for the attention he shew-
“ed to make my mother’s life easy;
“but if his liberality to her be in-
“deed, as you seem to think, a
“snare, what opinion ought I to
“form of his motives for a late
“offer he has made her, and which
“at first dazzled me, so noble and
“so disinterested did it appear!”

“I know no offer but one,”
interrupted Mr. Herbert hastily,
“which you ought even to have
“listened to.”

Then

“ Then the secret admonitions
“ of my heart were right !” cried
Sophia with an accent that at once
expressed exultation and grief.

“ But what was this offer,
“ child,” said Mr. Herbert ? “ I
“ am impatient to know it.”

“ I will tell you the whole affair
“ as it happened,” resumed Sophia ;
“ but you must not be surprised,
“ that my mother was pleased with
“ Sir Charles’s offer. He has been
“ her benefactor, and has a claim
“ to her regard : it would be
“ strange if she had not a good
“ opinion of him. You know
“ what that celebrated divine says,
“ whose writings you have made
“ me acquainted with : *Charity it-*
“ *self commands us where we know*
“ *no ill, to think well of all ; but*
“ *friendship, that goes always a pitch*
“ *higher, gives a man a peculiar*
“ *right and claim to the good opi-*
“ *nion*

nion of his friend. My mother
“ may be mistaken in the judg-
“ ment she has formed of Sir
“ Charles; but it is her friendship
“ for him, a friendship founded
“ upon gratitude for the good offi-
“ ces he has done her, that has
“ given rise to this mistake.”

Sophia, in her eagerness to justify her mother, forgot that she had raised Mr. Herbert's curiosity, and left it unsatisfied; and the good old man, charmed with the filial tenderness she shewed upon this occasion, listened to her with complacency, though not with conviction. At length she suddenly recollected herself, and entered upon her story; but a certain hesitation in her speech, accompanied with a bashful air that made her withdraw her eyes from him, to fix them upon the ground, intimated plainly enough her own sentiments of the

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affair she was going to acquaint him with.

“ You know, Sir,” said she,
“ Sir Charles has had a fit of ill-
“ nefs lately, which alarmed all his
“ friends. My mother was parti-
“ cularly attentive to him upon
“ this occasion, and I believe he
“ was fenfibly affected with her
“ kind concern for him. When
“ he recovered, he begged my mo-
“ ther, my fifter, and myself,
“ would accompany him in a little
“ excurfion to Hampstead to take
“ the air. We dined there, and
“ returning home early in the
“ evening, as we paffed through
“ Brook-ftreet, he ordered the
“ coach to ftop at the door of a
“ very genteel houfe, which ap-
“ peared to be newly painted and
“ fitted up. Sir Charles defired us
“ to go in with him and look at it,
“ and give him our opinion of the
“ furniture.

“ furniture. Nothing could be
“ more elegant and genteel, and
“ we told him so; at which, he ap-
“ peared extremely pleased, for all
“ had been done, he said, accord-
“ ing to his directions.

“ He came home with us, and
“ drank tea; after which he had a
“ private conversation with my
“ mother, which lasted about a
“ quarter of an hour; and when
“ they returned to the room
“ where they had left my sister
“ and I, Sir Charles appeared to
“ me to have an unusual thought-
“ fulness in his countenance, and
“ my mother looked as if she
“ had been weeping; yet there
“ was at the same time, an
“ expression of satisfaction in her
“ face.

“ He went away immediately,
“ when my mother, eager to give
“ vent to the emotions which filled

“ her heart, exclaimed, Oh, So-
“ phia, how much are you obliged
“ to the generous affection of that
“ man !”

“ You may imagine, Sir,” pur-
sued Sophia, in a sweet confusion,
“ that I was greatly affected with
“ these words. I begged my mo-
“ ther to explain herself. Sir
“ Charles,” said she, “ has made
“ you a present of that house
“ which we went to view this af-
“ ternoon ; and here,” added she,
giving me a paper, “ is a deed by
“ which he has settled three hun-
“ dred pounds a year upon you.”

“ I was silent, so was my sister,
“ who looked at me as if impatient
“ to know my thoughts of this
“ extraordinary generosity. My
“ thoughts indeed were so perplex-
“ ed, my notions of this manner
“ of acting so confused and uncer-
“ tain, that I knew not what to
“ say.

“ say. My mother told us Sir
“ Charles had declared to her, that
“ his late illness had given him oc-
“ casion for many uneasy reflections
“ upon my account ; that he shud-
“ dered with horror when he con-
“ sidered the unhappy state of my
“ fortune, and to what difficulties
“ I should have been exposed if he
“ had died ; and that, for the sa-
“ tisfaction of his own mind, he
“ had made that settlement upon
“ me, that whatever happened I
“ might be out of the reach of ne-
“ cessity.

“ I am afraid, Sir,” pursued So-
phia with a little confusion in her
countenance, “ that you will con-
“ demn me when I tell you I was
“ so struck at first with the seem-
“ ing candor and tenderness of Sir
“ Charles’s motives for this act of
“ generosity, that none but the most

F 3 “ grateful

"grateful sentiments rose in my mind."

"No, my dear," replied Mr. Herbert, "I do not condemn you: this snare was artfully laid; but when was it that your heart, or rather your reason, gave you those secret admonitions you spoke of?"

"Immediately," said Sophia: "a moment's reflection upon the conduct of Sir Charles served to shew me that some latent design lay concealed under this specious offer; but I am obliged to my sister for giving me a more distinct notion of it than my own confused ideas could furnish me with."

"Then you desired to know her opinion," said Mr. Herbert.

"Certainly," resumed Sophia, "this conversation passed in her presence,

“ presence, and as my elder sister
 “ she had a right to be con-
 “ sulted.”

“ Pray what did she say ? ” asked
 Mr. Herbert impatiently.

“ You know, Sir,” said Sophia,
 with a gentle smile, “ my sister
 “ takes every opportunity to rally
 “ me about my pretensions to wit :
 “ she told me it was great conde-
 “ scension in me, who thought my-
 “ self wiser than all the world be-
 “ fides, to ask her advice upon this
 “ occasion ; and that she would
 “ not expose herself to my con-
 “ tempt, by declaring her opinion,
 “ any farther than that she supposed
 “ Sir Charles did not consider this
 “ as a marriage-settlement.

“ These last words,” pursued So-
 phia, whose face was now covered
 with a deeper blush, “ let in so much
 “ light upon my mind, that I was
 “ ashamed and angry with myself

F 4

“ for

“ for having doubted a moment of
“ Sir Charles’s insincerity. I thank-
“ ed my sister, and told her she
“ should see that I would profit by
“ the hint she had given me.”

“ I wish,” interrupted Mr. Her-
bert, “ that she may profit as much
“ by you : but people of good un-
“ derstanding learn more from the
“ ignorant than the ignorant do
“ from them, because the wife
“ avoid the follies of fools, but fools
“ will not follow the example of
“ the wife : but what did Mrs.
“ Darnley say to this ?”

“ I never saw her so angry with
“ my sister before,” replied Sophia :
“ she said several severe things to her,
“ which made her leave the room
“ in great emotion ; and when we
“ were alone, I endeavoured to con-
“ vince my mother that it was not
“ fit I should make myself a de-
“ pendant upon Sir Charles, by ac-
“ cepting

“cepting such considerable presents: she was, however, of a different opinion, because Sir Charles’s behaviour had been always respectful in the highest degree to me, and because the manner in which he made this offer, left no room to suspect that he had any other design in it but to secure a provision for me, in case any thing should happen to him.”

“Your mother imposes upon herself,” replied Mr. Herbert; “but I hope, my dear child, you think more justly.”

“You may judge of my sentiments, Sir,” answered Sophia, “by the resolution I have taken: I wished to consult you; but as I had no opportunity for it, I satisfied myself with doing what I thought you would approve. My mother, prest by my argu-

ments, told me in a peevish way that I might act as I thought proper: upon which I retired, and, satisfied with this permission, I enclosed the settlement in a cover directed to Sir Charles. I had just sealed it, and was going to send it away, when my mother came into my room: I perceived she was desirous to renew the conversation about Sir Charles; but I carefully avoided it, for fear she should retract the permission she had given me to act as I pleased upon this occasion. My reserve piqued her so much, that she forbore to enter upon the subject again; but as I had no opportunity of sending any letter that night without her knowledge, I was obliged to go to bed much richer than I desired to be; and the next morning, when we were at breakfast,

“ breakfast, a letter was brought
“ me from Sir Charles, dated four
“ o’clock, in which he informed me
“ that he was just setting out in a
“ post-chaise for Bath. His uncle,
“ who lies there at the point of
“ death, has it seems earnestly de-
“ fired to see him, and the messen-
“ ger told him he had not a minute
“ to lose.”

“ I am sorry,” interrupted Mr.
Herbert, “ that he did not get your
“ letter before he went.”

Sophia then taking it out of her
pocket, gave it to him, and begged
he would contrive some way to
have it safely delivered to Sir Charles;
“ and now, added she, my heart is
“ easy on that side, and I have no-
“ thing to do but to arm myself
“ with fortitude to bear the ten-
“ der reproaches of a mother,
“ whose anxiety for my interest
“ makes her see this affair in a very

“ different light from that in which
“ you and I behold it.”

Mr. Herbert put the letter carefully into his pocket-book, and promised her it should be conveyed to Sir Charles; then taking her hand, which he pressed affectionately, “ You
“ have another sacrifice yet to
“ make, my dear good child,” said he, “ and I hope it will not cost
“ you much to make it. You must
“ resolve to see Sir Charles no more:
“ it is not fit you should receive his
“ visits, since you suspect his designs are not honourable, and
“ you have but too much cause for
“ suspicion. It is not enough to
“ be virtuous: we must appear so
“ likewise; we owe the world a
“ good example, the world, which
“ oftener rewards the appearances
“ of merit, than merit itself. It
“ will be impossible for you to
“ avoid seeing Sir Charles some-
“ times,

“ times, if you continue with your
“ mother : you have no authority
“ to forbid his visits here ; and
“ whether you share them or not,
“ they will be all placed to your
“ account. Are you willing, Miss
“ Sophia, to go into the country ;
“ and I will board you in the fa-
“ mily of a worthy clergyman,
“ who is my friend ? His wife and
“ daughters will be agreeable com-
“ panions for you ; you will find
“ books enough in his study to em-
“ ploy those hours which you de-
“ vote to reading ; and his conver-
“ sation will be always a source of
“ instruction and delight.”

Sophia, with tears in her eyes,
and a look so expressive that it con-
veyed a stronger idea of the grateful
sentiments which filled her heart,
than any words could do, thanked
the good old man for his generous
offer, and told him she was ready to
leave

leave London whenever he pleased : but unwilling to be an incumbrance upon his little fortune, she intreated him to be diligent in his enquiries for a place for her, that she might early inure herself to the humble condition which Providence thought fit to allot for her.

Mr. Herbert, entering into her delicate scruples, promised to procure her a proper establishment ; and it was agreed between them that he should acquaint her mother the next day with the resolution she had taken, and endeavour to procure her consent to it.



C H A P.

C H A P. VIII. *Mr. Herbert and Sophia carry their Point with great Difficulty.*

MR. Herbert well knew all the difficulties of this task, and prepared himself to sustain the storm which he expected would fall upon him. He visited Mrs. Darnley in the morning, and finding her alone, entered at once into the affair, by telling her that he had performed the commission Miss Sophia had given him ; that a friend of his who was going to Bath would take care to deliver her letter to her unworthy lover, who, added he, will be convinced, by her returning his settlement, that she has a just notion of his base designs, and despises him as well for his falshood and presumption, as for the

the mean opinion he has entertained of her.

The old gentleman, who was perfectly well acquainted with Mrs. Darnley's character, and had studied his part, would not give her time to recover from the astonishment his first words had thrown her into, which was strongly impressed upon her countenance, and which seemed to deprive her of the power of speech ; but added, with an air natural enough, " Your conduct, Mrs. Darnley, deserves the highest praises ; indeed I know not which to admire most, your disinterestedness, prudence, and judgment ; or Miss Sophia's ready obedience, and the noble sacrifice she makes to her honour and reputation. You knew her virtue might be securely depended upon, and you permitted her to act as she thought proper with regard

“ regard to the insidious offer Sir
“ Charles made her : thus, by trans-
“ ferring all the merit of a refusal
“ to her, you reflect a double lustre
“ upon your own, and she has fully
“ answered your intentions by re-
“ jecting that offer with the con-
“ tempt it deserved.”

While Mr. Herbert went on in this strain, Mrs. Darnley insensibly forgot her resentment ; her features assumed all that complacency which gratified vanity and self-applause could impress upon them : and although she was conscious her sentiments were very different from those which Mr. Herbert attributed to her, yet, as she had really spoke those words to Sophia which had given her a pretence to act as she had done, she concluded his praises were sincere, and enjoyed them as much as if she had deserved them.

It

It was her business now, however vexed at her daughter's folly, as she conceived it, to seem highly satisfied with her conduct, since what she had done could not be recalled; yet inwardly fretting at the loss of so noble a present, all her dissimulation could not hinder her from saying, that although she approved of Sophia's refusal, yet she could not help thinking she had been very precipitate, and that she ought to have waited till Sir Charles returned; and not have sent, but have given him back his settlement.

Mr. Herbert, without answering to that point, told her, that what now remained for her prudence to do was, to take away all foundation for slander, by peremptorily forbidding Sir Charles's future visits; (here Mrs. Darnley began to frown) "for since it is plain to us
" all,

" all, madam," pursued he, with-
 out seeming to perceive her emo-
 tion, " that marriage is not his in-
 " tention, by being allowed to
 " continue his addressee, miss So-
 " phia's character will suffer great-
 " ly in the opinion of the world ;
 " and the wisdom and discretion
 " by which you have hitherto been
 " governed in this affair, will not
 " secure you from very unfavour-
 " able censures. To shew there-
 " fore how much you are in earnest
 " to prevent them, I think it is
 " absolutely necessary that you
 " should send your daughter out of
 " this man's way."

Mrs. Darnley, who thought she
 had an unanswerable objection
 to make to this scheme, in-
 terrupted him eagerly, " You
 " know my circumstances, Mr.
 " Herbert, you know I cannot af-
 " ford to send my daughter from
 " me ;

“ me; how am I to dispose of
“ her, pray?”

“ Let not that care trouble you,
“ madam,” replied Mr. Herbert,
“ I will take all this expence upon
“ myself: I love Miss Sophia as
“ well as if she was my own child;
“ and slender as my income is,
“ I will be at the charge of her
“ maintenance till fortune and
“ her own merit place her in a
“ better situation.”

Mr. Herbert then acquainted her with the name and character of the clergyman in whose family he intended to place Sophia: he added, that the village to which she was going being at no great distance, she might hear from her frequently, and sometimes visit her, without much expence or inconvenience.

Mrs. Darnley having nothing that was reasonable to oppose to these kind and generous offers, had
recourse

recourse to rage and exclamation. She told Mr. Herbert that he had no right to interpose in the affairs of her family; that he should not dispose of her daughter as he pleased; that she would exert the authority of a parent, and no officious meddler should rob her of her child.

Mr. Herbert now found it necessary to change his method with this interested mother, "Take care, " madam," said he, with a severe look, "how far you carry your opposition in this case: the world " has its eyes upon your conduct; " do not give it reason to say that " your daughter is more prudent " and cautious than you are; nor " force her to do that without " your consent which you ought, " to be the first to advise her, " to."

"Without my consent!" replied Mrs. Darnley, almost breathless

less with rage ; “ will she go with-
“ out my consent, say you ; have
“ you alienated her affections
“ from me so far ? I will soon know
“ that.”

Then rising with a furious air, she called Sophia, who came into the room, trembling, and in the utmost agitation. The melancholy that appeared in her countenance, the paleness and disorder, the consequences of a sleepless night, which she had passed in various and afflicting thoughts, made Mr. Herbert apprehensive that her mother's obstinacy would prove too hard for her gentle disposition ; and that her heart, thus assaulted with the most powerful of all passions, love and filial tenderness, would insensibly betray her into a consent to stay.

Mrs. Darnley giving her a look of indignation, exclaimed with the
sarcastic

sarcastic severity with which she used formerly to treat her ; “ So
“ my wife, my dutiful daughter !
“ you cannot bear, it seems, to
“ live with your mother ; you are
“ resolved to run away from me,
“ are you ?”

“ Madam,” replied Sophia, with a firmness that disconcerted Mrs. Darnley, as much as it pleasingly surprised Mr. Herbert, “ it is not
“ you I am running away from, as
“ you unkindly say, I am going
“ into the country to free myself
“ from the pursuits of a man who
“ has imposed upon your goodness,
“ and my credulity ; one who I
“ am convinced, seeks my disho-
“ nour, and whose ensnaring ad-
“ dresses have already, I am afraid,
“ given a wound to my reputa-
“ tion, which nothing but the re-
“ solution I have taken to avoid
“ him can heal.”

Poor

Poor Sophia, who had with difficulty prevailed over her own softness to speak in this determined manner, could not bear to see the confusion into which her answer had thrown her mother; but sighing deeply, she retired towards the window, and wiped away the tears that fell from her charming eyes.

Mrs. Darnley, who observed her emotion, and well knew how to take advantage of that amiable weakness in her temper, which made any opposition, however just and necessary, painful to her, desired Mr. Herbert to leave her alone with her daughter, adding that his presence was a constraint upon them both.

Sophia, hearing this, and dreading lest he should leave her to sustain the storm alone, went towards her mother, and with the most
persuasive

persuasive look and accent, begged her not to part in anger from Mr. Herbert.

“ I cannot forgive Mr. Herbert,” said Mrs Darnley, “ for supposing I
“ am less concerned for your ho-
“ nour than he is. I see no necessi-
“ ty for your going into the coun-
“ try ; your reputation is safe while
“ you are under my care ; it is
“ time enough to send you out of
“ Sir Charles’s way when we are
“ convinced his designs are not
“ honourable. Mr. Herbert, by
“ filling your head with groundless
“ apprehensions, will be the ruin
“ of your fortune.”

“ Sir Charles’s dissembled affec-
“ tion for me,” interrupted Sophia,
“ will be the ruin of my character.
“ There is no way to convince the
“ world that I am not the willing
“ dupe of his artifices, but by fly-
“ ing from him as far as I can : do

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G

“ not

“ not, my dear mamma,” pursued she, bursting into tears, “ oppose my going ; my peace of mind, my reputation depend upon it.”

“ You shall go when I think proper,” replied Mrs. Darnley ; “ and as for you, Sir,” turning to Mr. Herbert, “ I desire you will not interpose any farther in this matter.”

“ Indeed I must, madam,” said the good old man, encouraged by a look Sophia gave him ; “ I consider myself as guardian to your daughter, and in that quality I pretend to some right to regulate her conduct on an occasion which requires a guardian’s care and authority.”

“ Ridiculous !” exclaimed Mrs. Darnley, with a malignant sneer, “ what a jest ! to call yourself guardian to a girl who has not a shilling to depend upon.”

“ I am

“ I am the guardian of her honour and reputation,” said Mr. Herbert : “ these make up her fortune : and with these she is richer than if she possessed thousands without them.”

“ And do you, Miss,” said Mrs. Darnley to her daughter, with a scornful air, “ do you allow this foolish claim ? Are you this gentleman’s ward, pray ?”

“ Come, madam,” said Mr. Herbert, willing to spare Sophia the pain of answering her question, “ be persuaded that I have the tenderness of a parent, as well as guardian, for your daughter : it is absolutely necessary she should see Sir Charles no more ; and the most effectual method she can take to shun him, and to preserve her character, is to leave a place where she will be continually exposed to his importunity. I

G 2 “ hope

“ hope she will be able to procure
“ your consent to her going to-
“ morrow. I shall be here in the
“ morning with a post-chaise, and
“ will conduct her myself to the
“ house of my friend, whom I have
“ already prepared by a letter to
“ receive her.”

Mr. Herbert, without waiting for any answer, bowed and left the room. Sophia followed him to the door, and by a speaking glance assured him he might depend upon her perseverance.

C H A P.

C H A P. IX.

In which Sophia shews less of the Heroine than the Woman.

AS soon as Mr. Herbert went away, Harriot, who had been listening, and had heard all that past, entered the room. The virtue and strength of mind her sister shewed in the design she had formed of flying from Sir Charles Stanley excited her envy ; and she would have joined with her mother in endeavouring to prevail upon her to stay, to prevent the superiority such a conduct gave her, had not that envy found a more sensible gratification in the thought that Sophia would no longer receive the adorations of the young baronet ; and that all her towering hopes would

G 3

be

be changed to disappointment, and grief.

The discontinuance of those presents which Sir Charles so liberally bestowed on them, evidently on Sophia's account, and which had hitherto enabled them to live in affluence, affected her but little; for vanity is a more powerful passion than interest in the heart of a coquet; and the pleasure of seeing her sister mortified and deserted by her lover, outweighed all other considerations: besides, she was not without hopes that when Sophia was out of the way, her own charms would regain all their former influence over the heart of Sir Charles.

She came prepared, therefore, to support her in her resolution of going into the country; but Mrs. Darnley, who did not enter into her views, and who had no other
attention

attention but to secure to herself that ease and affluence she at present enjoyed, expected Harriot would use her utmost efforts to prevent her sister from disobliging a man whose liberality was the source of their happiness.

She complained to her in a tender manner of Sophia's unkindness; she exaggerated the ill consequences that might be apprehended from the affront she put on Sir Charles, by thus avowing the most injurious suspicions of him; and declared she expected nothing less than to be reduced by the loss of her pension to that state of misery from which he had formerly relieved her.

Sophia melted into tears at these words; but a moment's reflection convinced her, that her mother's apprehensions were altogether groundless: Sir Charles was not ca-

pable of so mean a revenge; and Sophia, on this occasion, defended him with so much ardor, that Miss Darnley could not help indulging her malice, by throwing out some severe sarcasms upon the violence of her affection for a man whom she affected to despise.

Sophia blushed; but answered calmly, "Well, sister, if I love Sir Charles Stanley, I have the more merit in leaving him."

"Oh, not a bit the more for that," replied Harriot; "for, as I read in one of your books just now, *Virtue would not go so far, if pride did not bear her company.*"

"You might also have read, sister," said Sophia, "that no woman is envious of another's virtue who is conscious of her own."

This retort threw Harriot into so violent a rage, that Sophia, who knew

knew what excesses she was capable of, left the room, and retired to pack up her cloaths, that she might be ready when Mr. Herbert called for her.

In this employment Mrs. Darnley gave her no interruption ; for Harriot having quitted her mother in a huff, because she did not join with her against Sophia, she was left at liberty to pursue her own reflections. After long doubt and perplexity in what manner to act, she resolved to consent that Sophia should depart ; for she saw plainly that it would not be in her power to prevent it, and she was willing to derive some merit from the necessity she was under of complying. She considered that if Sir Charles really loved her daughter, her flight on such motives would rather increase than lessen his passion ; and that all his resentment for being de-

prived of her sight would fall upon Mr. Herbert, who alone was in fault.

Mrs. Darnley, as has been before observed, was not of a temper to anticipate misfortunes, or to give herself much uneasiness about evils in futurity : she always hoped the best, not because she had any well-grounded reasons for it, but because it was much more pleasing to hope than to fear.

Sophia, when she saw her next, found her surprisingly altered : she not only no longer opposed her departure, but even seemed desirous of it ; and this she thought a master-piece of cunning which could not fail of gaining Mr. Herbert's good opinion ; never once reflecting that her former opposition deprived her of all the merit of a voluntary compliance.

This change in Mrs. Darnley left Sophia no more difficulties to
en-

encounter but what she found in her own heart. Industrious to deceive herself, she had imputed all the uneasy emotions there to the grief of leaving her mother contrary to her inclination: she had now her free consent to go, yet still those perturbations remained. She thanked her mother for her indulgence: she took her hand, and tenderly pressed it to her lips, tears at the same time flowing fast from her eyes.

Mrs. Darnley was cruel enough to shew that she understood the cause of this sudden passion. "What," said she, "to the poor
" blushing Sophia, after all the clutter you have made about leaving
" Sir Charles, does your heart fail
" you now you come to the
" trial?"

Sophia, abashed and silent, hid her glowing face with her handkerchief;

kerchief ; and having with some difficulty repressed another gush of tears, assumed composure enough to tell her mother that she hoped she should never want fortitude to do her duty.

“ To be sure,” replied Mrs. Darnley, “ with a sneer, one so wise “ as you can never mistake your “ duty.”

Sophia however understood hers so well that she did not offer to re-criminate upon this occasion ; for Mrs. Darnley was but a shallow politician, and was thrown so much off her guard by the vexation she felt, that an affair on which she built such great hopes had taken so different a turn, that she gave plain indications of her displeasure, and that her consent to her daughter's going was indeed extorted from her.

Sophia had many of these assaults to sustain, as well from Harriot as

Mrs.

Mrs. Darnley, during the remainder of that day; but they were of use to her. Her pride was concerned to prevent giving a real cause for such sarcasms as her sister in particular threw out: opposition kept up her spirits, and preserved her mind from yielding to that tender grief which the idea of parting for ever from Sir Charles excited.

C H A P.

C H A P. X.

The Description of two Rural Beauties.

WHEN Mr. Herbert came the next morning, Mrs. Darnley, who had no better part to play, had recourse again to dissimulation, and expressed great willingness to send her daughter away; but the good man, who saw the feint in her overacted satisfaction, suffered her to imagine that she had effectually imposed upon him.

Sophia wept when she took leave of her mother, and returned the cold salute her sister gave her with an affectionate embrace. She sighed deeply as Mr. Herbert helped her into the post-chaise; and continued pensive and silent for several minutes, not daring to raise her eyes

eyes up to her kind conductor, lest he should read in them what passed in her heart.

Mr. Herbert, who guessed what she felt on this occasion, was sensibly affected with that soft melancholy, so easy to be discovered in her countenance, notwithstanding all her endeavours to conceal it. He wished to comfort her, but the subject was too delicate to be mentioned: kind and indulgent as he was, he began to think his admired Sophia carried her concern on this occasion too far; so true that observation is, that the case of tried virtue is harder than that of untried: we require, from it as debts continual exertions of its power, and if we are at any time disappointed in our expectations, we blame with resentment as if we had been deceived.

Sophia's sensibility, however, was very excusable; in flying from Sir Charles

Charles she had done all that the most rigid virtue could demand ; for as yet she had only suspicions against him ; and this man, whose generous gift she had returned with silent scorn, whom she had avoided as an enemy, had hitherto behaved to her with all the tenderness of a lover, and all the benevolence of a friend. It was under that amiable idea that he now presented himself to her imagination ; her pride and her resentment were appeased by the sacrifice she had made in her abrupt departure, and every unkind thought of him was changed to tender regret for his loss.

Mr. Herbert, by not attempting to divert the course of her reflections, soon drew her out of her revery : his silence and reserve first intimated to her the impropriety of her behaviour. She immediately assumed

assumed her usual composure, and during the remainder of their little journey, she appeared as chearful and serene as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

The good curate with whom she was to lodge having rode out to meet his friend and his fair guest, joined them when they had come within three miles of his house. Mr. Herbert, who had descried him at a little distance, shewed him to Sophia: "There, my dear," said he, "is a man who, with more piety and learning than would serve to make ten bishops, is obliged to hire himself out at the rate of sixty pounds a year, to do the duty of the parish church, the rector of which enjoys three lucrative benefices, without praying or preaching above five times in a twelvemonth."

Mr. Lawson, for that was the curate's

curate's name, had now galloped up to the chaise, which Mr. Herbert had ordered the post-boy to stop, and many kind salutations passed between the two friends.

Sophia was particularly pleased with the candor and benevolence which appeared in the looks and behaviour of the good clergyman ; who gazed on her attentively, and found the good opinion he had entertained of her from Mr. Herbert's representations fully confirmed. The bewitching sweetness in her voice and eyes, the spirit that animated her looks, and the peculiar elegance of her person and address, produced their usual effects, and filled Mr. Lawson's heart with sentiments of tenderness, esteem, and respect for her.

Mrs. Lawson and her two daughters received her with that true politeness which is founded on
good

good sense and good nature. Both the young women were extremely agreeable in their persons, and Sophia contemplated with admiration the neat simplicity of their dress, their artless beauty, and native sweetness of manners. Health dyed their cheeks with blushes more beautiful than those the fine lady borrows from paint ; innocence and chearfulness lighted up smiles in their faces, as powerful as those of the most finished coquet ; and good humour and a sincere desire of obliging, gave graces to their behaviour which ceremony but poorly imitates.

These were Sophia's observations to Mr. Herbert, who seized the first opportunity of speaking to her apart, to ask her opinion of her new companions. He was rejoiced to hear her express great satisfaction in her new situation, and not doubting
but

but time and absence, assisted by her own good sense and virtue, would banish Sir Charles Stanley entirely from her remembrance; he scrupled not to leave her at the end of three days, after having tenderly recommended her to the care of this little worthy family, every individual of which already loved her with extreme affection.

Sophia was indeed so much delighted with the new scene of life she had entered upon, and her fancy was at first so struck with the novelty of all the objects she beheld, that the continual dissipation of her thoughts left no room for the idea of the baronet: but this deceitful calm lasted not long. She soon found by experience, that the silence and solitude of the country were more proper to nourish love than to destroy it; and

and that groves and meads, the nightingale's song, and the rivulet's murmur, were food for tender melancholy, and the soft reveries of imagination.

Mr. Lawfon's house was most romantically situated on the borders of a spacious park; from whose opulent owner he rented a small farm, which supplied his family with almost all the necessaries of life. Mrs. Lawfon his wife, brought him a very small fortune, but a great stock of virtue, good sense, and prudence. She had seen enough of the world to polish her manners without corrupting her heart; and having lived most part of her time in the country, she understood rural affairs perfectly well, and superintended all the business of their little farm. Their two daughters were at once the best house-wives, and the

the most accomplished young women in that part of the country. Mr. Lawson took upon himself the delightful task of improving their minds, and giving them a taste for useful knowledge: and their mother, besides instructing them in all the economical duties suitable to their humble fortunes, formed them to those decencies of manners and propriety of behaviour, which she had acquired by a genteel education, and the conversation of persons of rank. In the affairs of the family, each of the young women had their particular province assigned them. Dolly, the eldest, presided in the dairy; and Fanny, so was the youngest called, assisted in the management of the house. Sophia soon entertained a friendship for them both; but a powerful inclination attached her particularly to
Dolly.

Dolly. There was in the countenance of this young woman a certain sweetness and sensibility that pleased Sophia extremely; and though she had all that cheerfulness which youth, health, and innocence inspire, yet the pensiveness that would sometimes steal over her sweet features, the gentle sighs that would now and then escape her, excited a partial tenderness for her in the heart of Sophia.

She took pleasure in assisting her in her little employments. Dolly insensibly lost that awe which the presence of the fair Londoner first inspired, and repaid her tenderness with that warmth of affection which only young and innocent minds are capable of feeling.

C H A P.

C H A P. XI.

Sophia makes an interesting Discovery.

SOPHIA, instructed by her own experience, soon discovered that her young friend was in love ; but neither of them disclosed the secret of their hearts to each other. Dolly was with-held by bashful timidity, Sophia by delicate reserve. Fond as they were of each other's company, yet the want of this mutual confidence made them sometime chuse to be alone. Sophia having one evening strayed in the wood, wholly absorbed in melancholy thoughts, lost her way, and was in some perplexity how to recover the path that led to Mr. Lawson's house ; when looking anxiously around her, she saw Dolly at a distance, sitting under

der a tree. Overjoyed to meet her so luckily, she was running up to her, but stopped upon the appearance of a young man, who, seeing Dolly, flew towards her with the utmost eagerness, and with such an expression of joyful surprize in his countenance, as persuaded her this meeting was accidental.

Sophia, not willing to interrupt their conversation, passed on softly behind the trees, unobserved by Dolly, who continued in the same pensive attitude; but being now nearer to her, she perceived she was weeping excessively.

Sophia, who was greatly affected at this sight, could not help accompanying her tears with some of her own; and not daring to stir a step farther, for fear of being seen by the youth, she resolved to take advantage of her situation, to know

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the

the occasion of Dolly's extraordinary affliction.

The poor girl was so wrapt in thought, that she neither saw nor heard the approach of her lover, who called to her in the tenderest accent imaginable, "My dear Dolly, " is it you? Won't you look at " me? Won't you speak to me? " What have I done to make you " angry, my love? Don't go," (for upon hearing his voice she started from her seat, and seemed desirous to avoid him) " don't go, my dear " Dolly," said he, following her, (and she went slowly enough) " don't " drive me to despair."

" What would you have me do, " Mr. William," said she, stopping and turning gently towards him; " you know my father has forbid " me to speak to you, and I would " die rather than disoblige him : " you

“ you may thank your proud rich
“ aunt for all this. Pray let me
“ go,” pursued she, making some
faint efforts to withdraw her hand,
which he had seized and held fast
in his, “ you must forget me, Wil-
“ liam, as I have resolved to forget
“ you,” added she sighing, and
turning away her head, lest he should
see the tears that fell from her eyes.

Cruel as these words sounded in
the ears of the passionate William,
yet he found something in her voice
and actions that comforted him;
“ No, my dear Dolly,” said he,
endeavouring to look in her averted
face, “ I will not believe that you
“ have resolved to forget me; you
“ can no more forget me, than I
“ can you, and I shall love you as
“ long as I live---I know you say
“ this only to grieve me; you do
“ not mean it.”

H 2

“ Yes,

“ Yes, I do mean it,” replied Dolly, in a peevish accent, vexed that he had seen her tears. “ I know my duty, and you shall find that I can obey my father.” While she spoke this, she struggled so much in earnest to free her hand from his, that fearing to offend her, he dropped it with a submissive air.

Dolly having now no pretence for staying any longer, bid him farewell in a faltering voice, and went on, though with a slow pace, towards her father’s house. The youth continued for a moment motionless as a statue, with a countenance pale as death, and his eyes, which were suffused with tears, fixed on the parting virgin.

“ What,” cried he at last, in the most plaintive tone imaginable, “ can you really leave me thus? go then, my dear unkind Dolly, I

2

“ will

“ will trouble you no more with
“ my hateful presence ; I wish you
“ happy; but if you hear that any
“ strange mischief has befallen me,
“ be assured you are the cause
“ of it.”

He followed her as he spoke, and Dolly no longer able to continue her assumed rigour, stopped when he approached her, and burst into tears. The lover felt all his hopes revive at this sight, and taking her hand, which he kissed a thousand times, he uttered the tenderest vows of love and constancy ; to which she listened in silence, only now and then softly sighing ; at length she disengaged her hand, and gently begged him to leave her, lest he should be seen by any of the family. The happy youth, once more convinced of her affection for him, obeyed without a murmur.

H 3

Dolly,

Dolly, as soon as he had quitted her, ran hastily towards home ; but he, as if every step was leading him to his grave, moved slowly on, often looking back, and often stopping : so that Sophia, who was afraid she would not be able to overtake her friend, was obliged to hazard being seen by him, and followed Dolly with all the speed she could. As soon as she was near enough to be heard, she called out to her to stay. Dolly stopt, but was in so much confusion at the thought of having been seen by Miss Darnley, with her lover, that she had not courage to go and meet her. “ Ah, Miss Dolly,” said Sophia smiling, “ I have made a discovery ; “ but I do assure you it was as accidental as your meeting with “ that handsome youth, who I find “ is your lover.”

“ Yes,

“ Yes, indeed,” replied Dolly, whose face was covered with blushes, “ my meeting with that young man was not designed, at least on my part : but surely you jest, Miss Darnley, when you call him handsome : do you really think him handsome ? ”

“ Upon my word I do,” said Sophia ; “ he is one of the prettiest youths I ever saw ; and if the professions of men may be relied on,” added she, with a sigh, “ he certainly loves you ; but, my dear Dolly, by what I could learn from your conversation, he has not your father’s consent to make his addresses to you ; I was sorry to hear that, Dolly, because I perceive, my dear, that you like him.”

Dolly now held down her head, and blushed more than before, but continued silent. “ Perhaps you

H 4

“ will

“ will think me impertinent,” resumed Sophia, “ for speaking so
“ freely about your affairs ; but I
“ love you dearly, Miss Dolly.”---
“ And I,” interrupted Dolly,
“ throwing one of her arms about
“ Sophia’s neck, and kissing her
“ cheek, love you, Miss Darnley,
“ better a thousand times than ever
“ I loved any body, except my
“ father and mother and my sister.”

“ Well, well,” said Sophia, “ I
“ won’t dispute that point with you
“ now ; but if you love me so much
“ as you say, my dear Dolly, why
“ have you made a secret of this
“ affair ? friends do not use to be so
“ reserved with each other.”

“ Perhaps,” said Dolly, smiling
a little archly, “ you have taught
“ me to be reserved by your example ; but indeed,” added she,
“ with a graver look and accent,
“ I am

" I am not worthy to be your
 " confidant; you are my superior
 " in every thing: It would be pre-
 " sumption in me to desire to know
 " your secrets."

" You shall know every thing
 " that concerns me," interrupted
 Sophia, " which can be of use to
 " you, and add weight to that ad-
 " vice I shall take the liberty to give
 " you upon this occasion: I am far
 " from being happy, my dear Dol-
 " ly, and I blush to say it; it has
 " been in the power of a deceitful
 " man greatly to disturb my peace."

Sophia here wiped her charming
 eyes, and Dolly who wept sympa-
 thetically for her, and for herself,
 exclaimed, " Is there a man in the
 " world who could be false to you?
 " alas! what have I to expect?"

" Come, my dear," said Sophia,
 " leading her to the root of a large
 " tree, let us sit down here, we

H 5

" shall

“ shall not be called to supper yet,
“ you have time enough to give me
“ some account of this young man,
“ whom I should be glad to find
“ worthy of you : tell me how
“ your acquaintance began, and
“ what are your father’s reasons
“ for forbidding your correspon-
“ dence.”

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

*The Beginning of a very simple
Story.*

DOLLY, though encouraged by the sweet condescension of Sophia, who, to inspire her with confidence, freely acknowledged the situation of her own heart, blushed so much, and was in such apparent confusion, that Sophia was concerned at having made her a request which gave her so much pain to comply with.

At length the innocent girl, looking up to her with a bashful air, said, “ I should be ashamed,
“ dear miss, to own my weakness
“ to you, if I did not know that
“ you are too generous to think the
“ worse of me for it: to be sure I
“ have a great value for Mr.
H 6 “ William ;

“ William ; but I was not so foolish
“ as to be taken with his hand-
“ someness only, tho’ indeed he is
“ very handsome, and I am de-
“ lighted to find that you think
“ him so ; but Mr. William, as my
“ father can tell you, madam, is a
“ very fine scholar : he was edu-
“ cated in a great school at London,
“ and there is not a young squire
“ in all this country who has half
“ his learning, or knows how to
“ behave himself so genteely as he
“ does, though his father is but a
“ farmer : however, he is rich, and
“ he has but one child besides Mr.
“ William, and that is a sickly
“ boy, and not likely to live ; so
“ that Mr. William, it is thought,
“ will have all.”

“ I should imagine then,” said
Sophia, “ that this young man
“ would not be a bad match for
“ you ?”

“ A

“ A bad match !” replied Dolly, fighting : “ no certainly ; but his
“ aunt looks higher for him : yet
“ there was a time when she was
“ well enough pleased with his
“ liking me.”

“ What is his aunt,” said Sophia,
“ and how does it happen that she
“ has any authority over him ?”

“ Why you must know, ma-
“ dam,” answered Dolly, “ that his
“ aunt is very rich ; when she was
“ a young woman, a great lady
“ took a fancy to her, and kept her
“ as her companion a great many
“ years, and when she died, she left
“ her all her cloaths and jewels, and
“ a prodigious deal of money : she
“ never would marry, for she was
“ crossed in love they say in her
“ youth, and that makes her so
“ ill-natured and spiteful, I believe,
“ to young people ; but notwith-
“ standing that, I cannot help lov-
“ ing •

“ ing her, because she was always
“ so fond of Mr. William : she is
“ his god-mother, and when he
“ was about ten years old she sent
“ for him to London, and declared
“ she would provide for him as her
“ own ; and indeed she acted like
“ a mother towards him : she put
“ him to school, and maintained
“ him like a gentleman ; and when
“ he grew up, she would have made
“ a gentleman of him ; for she had
“ a great desire that he should be
“ an officer.

“ Mr. William at that time was
“ very fond of being an officer too ;
“ but as he was very dutiful and
“ obedient to his father, (indeed
“ Miss Sophia he is one of the best
“ young men in the world,) he
“ desired leave to consult him
“ first ; so about a year ago he
“ came to visit his father, and has
“ never been at London since ; and
“ he

“ he had not been long in the
 “ country before he changed his
 “ mind as to being an officer, and
 “ declared he would be a farmer like
 “ his father, and live a country
 “ life.”

“ Ah Dolly,” said Sophia smiling, “ I suspect you were the cause
 “ of this change, my friend.”

“ Why indeed,” replied Dolly,
 “ he has since told me so : but
 “ perhaps he flattered me when he
 “ said it ; for, ah my dear Miss, I
 “ remember what you said just now
 “ about the deceitfulness of men,
 “ and I tremble lest Mr. William
 “ should be like the rest.”

“ Well, my dear,” interrupted Sophia, “ go on with your story ;
 “ I am impatient to know when
 “ you saw each other first, and how
 “ your acquaintance began.”

“ You know, madam,” said Dolly, “ my father keeps us very re-
 “ tired ;

“ tired : I had no opportunity of
“ seeing Mr. William but at
“ church ; we had heard that far-
“ mer Gibbons had a fine son come
“ from London, and the Sunday af-
“ terwards when we were at
“ church, my sister, who is a giddy
“ wild girl, as you know, kept
“ staring about, in hopes of seeing
“ him. At last she pulled me hasti-
“ ly, and whispered, look, look,
“ Dolly, there is farmer Gibbons
“ just come in, and I am sure he
“ has got his London son with
“ him, see what a handsome young
“ man he is, and how genteely he
“ is drest !

“ Well, madam, I looked up,
“ and to be sure I met Mr. Wil-
“ liam’s eyes full upon me ; I felt
“ my face glow like fire ; for as
“ soon as I looked upon him, he
“ made me a low bow. My sister
“ courtesied ; but for my part, I
“ don’t

“ don’t know whether I courtesied
 “ or not : I was never so confused
 “ in my life, and during the whole
 “ time we were at church, I scarce
 “ ever durst raise my eyes ; for I
 “ was sure to find Mr. William
 “ looking into our pew.”

“ I suppose you was not displeas-
 “ ed with him,” said Sophia, “ for
 “ taking so much notice of you ?”

“ I do not know whether I was
 “ or not,” replied Dolly ; “ but I
 “ know that I was in a strange con-
 “ fusion during all church-time ;
 “ yet I observed that Mr. William
 “ did not go out when the rest of
 “ the congregation did, but staid
 “ behind, which made my sister
 “ laugh, for he looked foolish
 “ enough standing alone. But he
 “ staid to have an opportunity of
 “ making us another bow ; for it
 “ is my father’s custom, as soon as
 “ he has dismissed the people, to
 “ come

“ come into our pew and take us
“ home with him. I never shall
“ forget how respectfully Mr.
“ William saluted my father as
“ he passed him. I now made
“ amends for my former neglect
“ of him, and returned the bow
“ he made me with a very low
“ courtesy.

“ Fanny and I talked of him all
“ the way home: I took delight in
“ hearing her praise him; and al-
“ though I was never used to dis-
“ guise my thoughts before, yet
“ I knew not how it was, but I
“ was ashamed to speak so freely of
“ him as she did, and yet I am sure
“ I thought as well of him.”

“ I dare say you did,” said So-
phia, smiling; “ but my dear,”
pursued she in a graver accent,
“ this was a very sudden impressi-
“ on. Suppose this young man whose
“ person captivated you so much,
“ had

“ had been wild and dissolute, as
“ many young men are; how would
“ you have excused yourself for that
“ early prejudice in his favour,
“ which you took in so readily at
“ your eyes, without consulting your
“ judgment in the least?”

C H A P.

C H A P. XIII.

Dolly continues her Story.

DOLLY, fixing her bashful looks on the ground, remained silent for a moment; then sighing, answered, “ I am sure if I had not
“ believed Mr. William good and
“ virtuous, I should never have
“ liked him, though he had been
“ a hundred times handsomer than
“ he is; but it was impossible to
“ look on him and think him
“ otherwise; and if you had ob-
“ served him well, Miss Darnley,
“ his countenance has so much
“ sweetness and candor in it, as
“ my father once said, that you
“ could not have thought ill of
“ him.”

“ It is not always safe,” said Sophia, sighing likewise, “ to trust to
“ ap-

“ appearances : men’s actions as
“ well as their looks often deceive
“ us ; and you must allow, my dear
“ Dolly, that there is danger in
“ these sudden attachments ; but
“ when did you see this pretty youth
“ again ?”

“ Not till the next Sunday,”
replied Dolly ; “ and though you
“ should chide me never so much,
“ yet I must tell you that this
“ seemed the longest week I ever
“ knew in my life. I did not doubt
“ but he would be at church again,
“ and I longed impatiently for
“ Sunday. At last Sunday came ;
“ we went with my father as usual
“ to church, and would you be-
“ lieve it, Miss Darnley, though I
“ wished so much to see Mr. Wil-
“ liam, yet now I dreaded meeting
“ him, and trembled so when I
“ came into church, that I was
“ obliged to take hold of Fanny
to

“ to keep me from falling. She
“ soon discovered him, and pulled
“ me in order to make me look
“ up: he had placed himself in our
“ way, so that we passed close by
“ him. He made us a very low
“ bow, and my mother, who had
“ not seen him before, smiled and
“ looked extremely pleased with
“ him; for to be sure, Madam, she
“ could not help admiring him.

“ Well, I was very uneasy all
“ the time we were in church; for
“ Fanny whispered me that my
“ sweet-heart,” for so she called
Mr. William, “ minded nothing but
“ me. This made me blush exces-
“ sively, and I was afraid my mo-
“ ther would take notice of his
“ staring and my confusion; so that
“ (heaven forgive me) I was glad
“ when the sermon was ended.
“ He made us his usual compliment
“ at our going out, but I did not
“ look

“ look up: however, I was impati-
“ ent to be alone with Fanny, that
“ I might talk of him, and in the
“ evening we walked towards the
“ Park. Just as we had placed
“ ourselves under a tree, we saw a
“ fine drest gentleman, a visiter of
“ the Squire’s as we supposed,
“ coming up to us: upon which
“ we rose and walked homewards;
“ but the gentleman followed us,
“ and coming close to me, stared
“ impudently under my hat, and
“ swearing a great oath, said I was
“ a pretty girl, and he would have
“ a kifs. Fanny seeing him take
“ me by the arm, screamed aloud;
“ but I, pretending not to be
“ frightened, though I trembled
“ sadly, civilly begged him to let
“ me go. He did not regard what
“ I said, but was extremely rude:
“ so that I now began to scream as
“ loud as Fanny, struggling all the
“ time

“ time to get from him, but in
“ vain, and now who should come
“ to my assistance but Mr. Willi-
“ am : I saw him flying across a
“ field, and my heart told me it
“ was he, before he came near
“ enough for me to know him.”

“ As soon as Fanny perceived
“ him, she ran to him, and begged
“ him to help me ; but he did not
“ need intreaty ; he flew like a
“ bird to the place where I was,
“ and left Fanny far behind. The
“ rude gentleman bad him be gone,
“ and threatened him severely ; for
“ he had taken the hand I had at
“ liberty, which I gladly gave him,
“ and insisted upon his letting me
“ go : and now, my dear Miss
“ Darnley, all my fears were for
“ him, for the gentleman declared
“ that if he did not go about his
“ business, he would run him
“ through the body, and actually
“ drew

“ drew his sword ; I thought I should
“ have died at that terrible fight ;
“ my sister run towards home crying
“ like one distracted ; and as for
“ me, though the man had let go
“ my hand, and I might have run
“ away, yet I could not bear to
“ leave Mr. William to the mercy
“ of that cruel wretch ; and I did
“ what at another time I should
“ have blushed to have done. I took
“ his hand and pulled him with
“ all my force away ; but he, en-
“ raged at being called puppy by
“ the gentleman, who continued
“ swearing, that he would do him
“ a mischief, if he did not leave
“ the place, begged me to make the
“ best of my way home ; and
“ turning furiously to him who was
“ brandishing his sword about, he
“ knocked him down with one
“ stroke of a cudgel which he
“ fortunately had in his hand,
Vol. I. I “ and

“ and snatching his sword from
“ him, he threw it among the
“ bushes.”

“ Upon my word (said Sophia)
“ your William’s character rises
“ upon me every moment: this
“ was a very gallant action, and I
“ do not wonder at your liking him
“ now.”

“ Ah, Miss (cried Dolly) if
“ you had seen how he looked
“ when he came back to me, if
“ you had heard the fine things he
“ said-----Well, you may imagine
“ I thanked him for the kindness
“ he had done me, and he protest-
“ ed he would with pleasure lose
“ his life for my sake. I think I
“ could have listened to him for
“ ever; but now my father ap-
“ peared in sight. My sister had
“ alarmed him greatly with her ac-
“ count of what had happened, and
“ he was coming hastily to my as-
“ sistance,

“ distance, followed by my mother
“ and all the family. As soon as
“ we perceived them coming we
“ increased our pace; for we had
“ walked very slowly hitherto:
“ then it was that Mr. William,
“ who had not spoke so plainly be-
“ fore, told me how much he loved
“ me, and begged I would give
“ him leave to see me sometimes.
“ I replied, that depended upon my
“ father, and this was prudent,
“ was it not, my dear Miss Darn-
“ ley?”

“ Indeed it was,” answered So-
phia, “ but what said your lover?”
“ He sighed, Madam,” resumed
Dolly, “ and said he was afraid
“ my father would not think him
“ worthy of me: he owned he
“ was no otherwise worthy of me
“ than from the great affection he
“ bore me, and then--But here I
I 2 “ fear

“fear you will think him too bold
“and perhaps blame me.”

“I hope not,” said Sophia.

“Why, Madam,” continued
Dolly, “he took my hand and
“kissed it a thousand times, and
“tho’ I did all I could to be sure to
“pull it away, yet he would not
“part with it, till my father was
“so near that he was afraid he
“would observe him; and then
“he let it go, and begged me in a
“whisper not to hate him. Bless
“me, what a strange request that
“was, Miss Darnley! how could I
“hate one to whom I had been so
“greatly obliged! I was ready to
“burst into tears at the very thought,
“and told him I was so far from
“hating him, that-----

“Pray go on, my dear (said So-
“phia) observing she hesitated and
“was silent.”

“I told

“ I told him, *Madam*,” returned she, “ that I would always regard him as long as I lived. — I did not say too much, did I?”

“ I suppose,” said *Sophia*, “ you gave him to understand that it was in gratitude for the service he had done you.”

“ To be sure,” said *Dolly*, “ I put it in that light. Well I am glad you approve of my behaviour, *Miss Darnley*; so, as I was telling you, my father came up to us, and thanked Mr. William for having rescued his daughter; he then asked him what he had done with the rude fellow? Mr. William told him he had given him a lucky stroke with his cudgel, which made him measure his length on the ground; but,” said he (and sure that shewed excessive good nature) I hope I have not hurt him much :”

“ My father said he would go
 “ and see; and then shaking Mr.
 “ William kindly by the hand, he
 “ called him a brave youth, and
 “ said he hoped they should be
 “ better acquainted. — Oh! how
 “ glad was I to hear him say so:
 “ My mother too was vastly civil
 “ to him; and as for Fanny, I
 “ thought she would have hugged
 “ him, she was so pleased with
 “ him for his kindness to me.
 “ My mother insisted upon his
 “ staying to drink tea with us;
 “ and as soon as my father came
 “ back, we all went in toge-
 “ ther.”

“ Pray what became of the
 “ poor vanquished knight?” said
 Sophia, smiling.

“ Oh, I forgot to tell you,” re-
 sumed Dolly, “ that my father
 “ said he saw him creeping along
 “ as if he was sorely bruised with
 “ his

" his fall, supporting himself with
 " his sword, which it seems he had
 " found. We were all glad it was
 " no worse, and Mr. William
 " having accepted my mother's in-
 " vitation, he staid with us till the
 " evening was pretty far ad-
 " vanced; and then my father ac-
 " companied him part of his way
 " home, and at parting, as he told
 " us, desired to see him often.

" He was not backward, you
 " may be sure, in complying with
 " his request: he came so often,
 " that my father was surprised; and
 " besides, my sister and I scarce
 " ever went out to walk but we
 " met him; so that one would have
 " imagined he lived in the fields
 " about our house. My mother
 " at last suspected the truth, and
 " questioned me about him, and
 " I told her all that he had ever
 " said to me; and not long after-

“wards he took an opportunity to
“open his heart to my father, and
“asked his permission to make his
“addresses to me. With such
“modesty and good sense he spoke,
“that my father was extremely
“pleased with him : but told him
“that he must consult his friends,
“and know whether they approved
“of it, and then he would consi-
“der of his proposal. Mr. William,
“as he afterwards told me, wrote to
“his aunt first ; for he was well
“assured that his father would agree
“to any thing which she thought
“for his advantage. “

“He had a very favourable an-
“swer from Mrs. Gibbons, for she
“had changed her mind also, with
“regard to his being an officer, as
“war was then talked of ; and she
“was afraid of his being sent
“abroad. He shewed me her let-
“ter, and she told him in it, that
“since

“ since he was resolved to settle
“ in the country, she approved of
“ his marrying; and was glad
“ he had not fixed his affections
“ upon some homespun farmer’s
“ daughter; but had chosen a gen-
“ tlewoman, and one who was
“ well brought up. She added,
“ that she intended to come into
“ the country, in a few weeks;
“ and if she found the young lady
“ (so she called me) answered his
“ description, she would hasten the
“ marriage, and settle us hand-
“ somely.---Oh! how pleased was
“ I with this letter, and how did
“ it rejoice Mr. William!”

“ I should never have done, were
“ I to tell you all the tender things
“ he said to me. Mr. Gibbons,
“ at his son’s desire, came to my
“ father, and begged him to give
“ his consent, which he obtained;
“ for my father had well considered

“ the affair before: and nothing
 “ was wanting but Mrs. Gibbon’s
 “ arrival to make us all happy.
 “ Mr. William thought every hour
 “ an age till she came, and prest her
 “ continually in his letters to hasten
 “ her journey.

“ Alas! if he had known what
 “ was to happen, he would not
 “ have been so impatient; for soon
 “ after she came, all our fine
 “ hopes were blasted; and I have
 “ now nothing to expect but mis-
 “ ery.”

CHAP.

greatest and most noble of all. **CHAPTER XV.** *Mr. Charles makes his appearance again.*

POOR Dolly was so oppressed with grief, when she came to this part of her story, that she was unable to proceed, and burst into tears. The tender Sophia, who was greatly affected with the anguish she saw her in, employed every soothing art to comfort her. And Dolly being a little composed, was going to continue her story, when she saw her sister looking about for them; Sophia and she immediately rose up and joined Fanny, who rallied them both upon their fondness for lonely places; but perceiving that Dolly had been weeping, she immediately became grave, and accommodated her looks and beha-

viour to the gentle melancholy of her sister.

Sophia, from the state of her own mind, was but too much disposed to sympathize with the love-sick Dolly: these softening conversations were ill calculated to banish from her remembrance the first object of her innocent affections; and who, with all his faults, she still loved. Dolly's story awakened a thousand tender ideas, and recalled to her memory every part of Sir Charles's conduct which had any resemblance to that of the faithful and passionate William.

She dwelt with tender regret upon these pleasing images, and for a while forgot how necessary it was for her peace, to suppress every thought of Sir Charles, that tended to lessen her just resentment against him.

But,

But, good and pious as she was, the passion she could not wholly subdue, she regulated by reason and virtue; for, as an eminent Divine says, "Although it is not in our power to make affliction no affliction; yet we may take off the edge of it, by a steady view of those divine joys prepared for us in another state."

It was quite otherwise with Sir Sir Charles: for the guilty, if unhappy, are doubly so; because they are deprived of those resources of comfort, which the virtuous are sure to find in the consciousness of having acted well.

Sir Charles, upon finding his settlement sent back to him, in such a manner, as shewed not only the most obstinate resolution to reject his offers, but also a settled contempt for the offerer, became a prey
to

to the most violent passions: rage, grief, affronted pride, love ill requited, and disappointed hope, tormented him by turns; not was jealously without a place in his heart; the chaste, the innocent, the reserved Sophia, became suspected by the man, who in vain attempted to corrupt her; for true it is, that libertinism gives such a colour to the actions of others, as takes away all distinction between virtue and vice.

Love, he argued, is either rewarded with a reciprocal affection, or with an inward and secret contempt; therefore he imputed Sophia's rejection of his offers, not to her disapprobation of the intention of them, but to want of affection for his person; and from her youth, and the tender sensibility of her heart, he concluded, that since he had failed in making an impression on it, it was already bestowed upon

another; one while he resolved to think no more of her, and repay her indifference and disdain with silence and neglect; the next moment, dreading lest he had lost her for ever, he regretted his having alarmed her with too early a discovery of his intentions; and sometimes his passion transported him so far, as to make him think seriously of offering her his hand: then starting at his own weakness, and apprehensive of the consequences, he sought to arm himself against that tenderness which suggested so mad a design, by reflecting on her indifference towards him, and accounting for it in such a manner, as fixed the sharpest stings of jealousy in his mind.

Thus various and perplexed were his thoughts and designs; and he was incapable of resolving upon any thing, except to see her; and so
great

was his impatience, that he would have set out for London the moment he received the fatal paper, but decency would not permit him to leave his uncle, who was in a dying condition, and wished only to expire in his arms.

The poor man, however, lingered a week longer, during which Sir Charles passed some of the most melancholy hours he had ever known; at length his uncle's death left him at liberty to return to London, which he did immediately, and alighted at Mrs. Darnley's house. Upon hearing she was at home, he did not send in his name, but walked up stairs with a beating heart; he found Mrs. Darnley and Harriot together, but not seeing the person whom he only wished to see, he cast a melancholy look round the room, and answering, in a confused and dejected manner, the mother's excessive

excessive politeness, and the cold civility of the daughter, he threw himself into a chair with a deep sigh, and was silent.

So evident a discomposure pleased Mrs. Darnley as much as it mortified Harriot. As for Sir Charles, pride and resentment hindered him at first from enquiring for Sophia; but his anxiety and impatience to hear of her, soon prevailed over all other considerations; and though he asked for her with an affected carelessness, yet his eyes, and the tone of his voice betrayed him.

Mrs. Darnley told him, that she was gone into the country: "Very much against my inclination," said she: "but Mr. Herbert, who you know, Sir, has great power over her, more I think than I have, would have it so."

Sir Charles growing pale as death, replied, in great emotion, "What! gone

“ gone into the country ? Where is
“ she gone ? to whom ? why did
“ she go ? Against your inclina-
“ tion, did you say, Madam ? what
“ could possibly induce her to this ?
“ You surprize me excessively.”

Harriot, who did not chuse to be present at the explanation of this affair, now rose up, and went out of the room, smiling sarcastically, as she passed by Sir Charles, and bridling with all the triumph of conscious beauty. He, who was in a bad humour, beheld her ~~also~~ not only with indifferéce but contempt, which he suffered to appear pretty plain in his countenance ; for he thought it but just to mortify her for her ill usage of her sister, without considering that he himself was far more guilty, in that respect, towards the amiable Sophia, and equally deserved to be hated by her.

When

When Harriot was gone, Mrs. Darnley instantly renewed the conversation concerning Sophia; and finding that the young baronet listened to her, with eager attention, she gave him a full account of all that had happened during his absence: she represented Sophia as having followed implicitly the directions of Mr. Herbert, whom she called a busy, meddling, officious, old man; and as the behaviour of her daughter, at her going away, gave sufficient room to believe, that her heart suffered greatly by the effort she made, she dwelt upon every circumstance that tended to shew the concern she was under; and did not scruple to exaggerate, where she thought it would be pleasing.

Sir Charles, though he inwardly rejoiced at what he heard, yet dissembled so well, that no signs of it appeared in his countenance. He
now

now seemed to listen with much indifference, and coldly said, he was sorry Miss Sophia would not permit him to make her easy.

The tranquillity he affected, alarmed Mrs. Darnley: she who was ever ready to judge by appearances, concluded that all was over, and that the baronet was irrecoverably lost; but had her judgment been more acute, she would have perceived, that he was still deeply interested in every thing that related to Sophia. The questions he asked were not such as curiosity suggests, but the tender anxiety of doubting love. Mrs. Darnley informed him of all he wished to hear; Sophia had indeed fled from him, but not without reluctance and grief: she was at present removed from his sight, but she was removed to silence and solitude; and she carried with her a fond impression,

pression, which solitude would not fail to increase.

Thus satisfied, he put an end to his visit, with all imaginable composure, leaving Mrs. Darnley in doubt, whether she should see him again, and more enraged than ever with Mr. Herbert, whose fatal counsels had overthrown all her hopes.

C H A P.

C H A P. XV.

Dolly meets her Lover unexpectedly.

IT was not long before Sophia had an account of Sir Charles's visit from her mother, who, forgetting the part she had acted before, wrote her a letter full of invectives against her obstinacy and disobedience, and bitter upbraidings of her folly, for losing by her ill-timed pride the heart of such a man as Sir Charles.

She told her, with a kind of exultation, that he had entirely forgotten her, and repeated every circumstance of his behaviour while he was with her, and every word he had spoke, as all tending to shew his indifference; but though this was done to mortify Sophia, and make her repent of her precipitate depar-

departure, yet her discernment, and that facility which lovers have, in flattering their own wishes, pointed out to her many things in this minute relation, which served rather to nourish hope than destroy it.

Mrs. Darnley added, as the finishing stroke, that Sir Charles looked pale and thin; she attributed this alteration in his health to efforts he had made to banish her from his heart, and thence inferred that a resolution which had cost him so much trouble to confirm, would not be easily broke through; and that she had no reason to expect he would ever desire to see her more.

Sophia could not read this part of the letter without tears, tears that flowed from tender sensibility, accompanied with a sensation which was neither grief nor joy, but composed

posed of both : that Sir Charles should resolve to forget her was indeed afflicting, but that this resolution should cost him struggles so painful as to affect his health, could not but raise her depressed hopes, since it shewed the difficulty of the attempt, and consequently that the success was doubtful.

This letter gave so much employment to her thoughts, that to be at liberty to indulge them she took her evening walk without soliciting the company of her beloved Dolly, and wandered far into the wood, attracted by those romantic shades which afford such soothing pleasure to a love-sick mind. Here, while she meditated on her mother's letter, and read it over and over, still seeking, and still finding something new in it to engage her attention, she heard the voices of some persons talking behind her,

2

and

and suddenly recollecting Dolly's adventure, she began to be alarmed at the distance to which she had unwarily strayed, and turned her steps hastily towards home.

Mean time a sudden gust of wind blew off her hat, and carried it several paces back: she turned, in order to recover it, and saw it taken up by a genteel young man, who on a nearer approach she knew to be the lover of her young friend. Pleased at this encounter, she advanced to receive her hat from him, which he gave her with a blushing grace, awed by the dignity of her mein, and that sparkling intelligence which beamed in her eyes, and seemed to penetrate into his inmost soul; for Sophia, who was deeply interested for her innocent and unhappy friend, considered him attentively, and was desirous of entering into some conver-

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sation

fation with him, that she might be enabled to form a more exact judgment of his understanding and manners than she could from the accounts of the partial Dolly.

While she was talking to him they were joined by an ancient gentlewoman, who accosting Sophia, told her in an affected style and formal accent, that her nephew was very happy in having had an opportunity to do her this little piece of service.

Sophia, who saw an old woman, apparently oppressed with the infirmities of years, dressed in all the ridiculous foppery of the last age, was so little pleased with her, that she would have answered this compliment with great coldness, had not the desire and hope of being serviceable to her friend made her conquer her growing disgust; she therefore resolved to improve this
 oppor-

opportunity of commencing an acquaintance with the aunt of young William, and met her advances with her usual sweetness and affability, so that the old woman was quite charmed with her; and being very desirous to gain her good opinion, and to shew her breeding, of which she was extremely vain, overwhelmed her with troublesome ceremony; and, to display her understanding, of which she was equally proud, murdered so many hard words, that her discourse was scarcely intelligible.

Sophia would fain have drawn in the youth to partake of their conversation, but his aunt's volubility left him very little to say; yet in that little Sophia thought she discovered both good sense and politeness.

The evening being now pretty far advanced, Sophia thought it time

to separate, and took leave of her new acquaintance. Their parting was protracted by so many courtesies and compliments from the old lady, that her patience was almost wearied out; at last she got free from her, and quickened her pace towards home, when on a sudden she heard her in a tremulous voice calling out, "Madam, madam, pray stop one moment." Sophia looked back, and seeing Mrs. Gibbons come tottering up to her with more speed than was consistent with her weakness, she met her half way, and smiling, asked her why she had turned back.

"Oh, madam," replied she, "I am ready to sink with confusion! what a *faux pas* in good breeding have I committed! to be sure you will think I have been used to converse with savages only." Sophia,

phia, not able to guess what this speech tended to, looked at Mr. Gibbons as if she wished for an explanation.

“ My aunt, madam,” said the youth, (blushing a little at the old woman’s affectation,) “ is concerned that you should walk home alone, and that I cannot offer my service to attend you, being obliged to lead her, as you see.”

“ That is not all, nephew,” said the ceremonious gentlewoman : “ you do not tell the young lady the true cause of the *dilemnia* I am in : I would not leave you, madam,” pursued she, “ till I saw you safe home, but you live with a family who has affronted me, and I cannot endure to come within sight of the house. I never can forgive an affront, that would be to shew I do not understand the laws of good breed-

K 3

“ ing :

“ ing : but I thank heaven no body
“ can charge me with that, I was
“ very early *instituted* into polite
“ life ; but some people are not to
“ be *assessed* with.”

“ I hope,” said Sophia, (scarce
able to compose her countenance
to any tolerable degree of seriousness)
“ that none of Mr. Lawson’s
“ family have given you cause of
“ complaint: they seem to me in-
“ capable of affronting any one,
“ much more a person that”----

“ Oh, dear madam,” interrupted
the old lady, courtesying low, “ you
“ do me a great deal of honour ;
“ but you will find, nay you must
“ have observed already, that Mrs.
“ Lawson is vulgar, very vulgar,
“ she knows nothing of decorums.”

“ I am very sorry for this mis-
“ understanding between you,” said
Sophia, “ and I should think it a
“ very great happiness if I could
“ be

“ be any way useful in renewing
“ your friendship.”

“ Oh,” cried Mrs. Gibbons,
“ you might as well think of join-
“ ing the *Antipoles*, madam, as of
“ bringing us together again ; and
“ I am grieved beyond measure
“ when I think that it is impossible
“ for me to wait on you.”

“ However,” answered Sophia,
“ you will have no objection, I
“ hope, to my coming to see you.”

“ Oh ! I must not admit of that
“ by any means, madam,” replied
Mrs. Gibbons, “ you came last
“ into the country, and you are
“ entitled to the first visit ; I would
“ not for the world break through
“ the laws of politeness ; I am
“ sorry you have so indifferent an
“ opinion of my breeding.”

Sophia perceiving that the old
gentlewoman was a little discom-

K 4 pose,

posed, for this article of good breeding was a tender point with her, endeavoured to bring her into good humour, by some well-timed compliments, and once more took leave of her; but Mrs. Gibbons now insisted upon her nephew's seeing her safe home, saying, "She would rest herself under a tree till he came back."

Sophia but faintly declined this civility, for she feared to offend her again; and the joy that sparkled in William's eyes when his aunt made this offer of his attendance, made her unwilling to disappoint him of the hope of seeing his mistress; so after much ceremony on the part of Mrs. Gibbons, they separated.

As they walked, Sophia took occasion to express her concern for the violent resentment his aunt had en-

entertained against Mr. Lawson's family, and which seemed to make a reconciliation hopeless.

The youth told her, that nothing could be more trivial than the accident that had occasioned it; "and yet," pursued he, sighing deeply, "slight as it is, the consequences are likely to be fatal enough."

During their conversation Sophia discovered so much good sense and delicacy of sentiment in the young William, that she more than ever pitied the fate of these poor lovers, whose happiness was sacrificed to the capricious temper of an affected old woman: she assured him she would neglect no opportunity to improve her acquaintance with his aunt: "And perhaps," said she, with an enchanting smile, that expressed the benevolence of her heart, "I may be so fortunate as

- K 5

" to

“ to effect a reconciliation between
“ her and my Dolly’s family.”

Mr. Gibbons thanked her in transports of joy and gratitude; and now Dolly and her sister, who had walked out in search of Sophia, appearing in sight, she mended her pace, in order to come up with them soon; for in the ardent glances that William sent towards his mistress, she read his impatience to speak to her.

Dolly, who was in the utmost surprise, to see Sophia thus accompanied; took no notice of William; but avoiding, with a sweet bashfulness, his earnest and passionate looks, she fixed her eyes on Miss Darnley, as if she wished to hear from her by what chance they had met.

“ I know,” said Sophia to her smiling, “ that you did not expect
“ to see me so agreeably engaged;
“ but Mr. Gibbons can inform you
“ how

“ how his aunt, whom we left in
“ the forest yonder, and I became
“ acquainted.” She then addressed
some discourse to Fanny, to give the
lovers an opportunity of talking to
each other.

Dolly asked a thousand questions
concerning their meeting, and his
aunt's behaviour to Miss Darnley ;
but the passionate youth leaving it
to Sophia to satisfy her curiosity,
employed the few moments he had
to stay with her in tender assur-
ances of his own unaltered affec-
tion, and complaints of her in-
difference.

“ Surely,” said Dolly, with
tears in her eyes, “ I ought not
“ to be blamed for obeying my
“ father.”

“ Ah, my dear Dolly,” replied
William, “ our affections are not
“ in the power of our fathers ;

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“ and

“ and if you hate me now be-
“ cause your father commands
“ you to do so, you never loved
“ me.”

“ Hate you,” cried Dolly ; “ no,
“ Mr. William, my father never
“ bid me hate you ; and if he had
“ I am sure I could not have obey-
“ ed him : he only commanded me
“ to forget you.”

“ Only to forget me !” repeated
William in a melancholy tone :
“ then you think that little, Dol-
“ ly ; and perhaps you will be able
“ to obey him ; but be assured I
“ would rather be hated by you
“ than forgotten.”

“ That is strange, indeed,”
said Dolly, smiling through her
tears.

“ You would not think it
“ strange,” replied the youth, in
an accent that expressed at once
grief

grief and repentment, "if you
" had ever loved. Ah Dolly!
" are all your tender promises come
" to this! little did I imagine I
" should ever see you altered thus!
" but I will trouble you no more,"
added he, sighing, as if his heart
would break; "I will endeavour
" to follow your example: per-
" haps it is not so difficult a thing
" as I imagined to cure one's self
" of love; you have shewn me it
" is possible, and if I fail in the
" attempt, I can be but miserable,
" and that you have made me
" now." As he spoke these words,
he turned half from her, and let
fall some tears.

Dolly, who had no intention to
make him uneasy, was excessively
affected with this sight, and not a
little alarmed at what he had said:
"And will you," said she, in the
most moving tone imaginable,
" will

“ will you try to forget me ? then
“ indeed you will be false and
“ perjured too, for you have sworn
“ a thousand times that you would
“ love me for ever.”

“ Why should you wish to see
“ me wretched,” said he ; “ you
“ have resolved to love me no longer,
“ and it is but reasonable that I
“ should try to forget you.”

He would have proceeded in this strain ; but turning to look on her, he saw her sweet face overspread with tears. “ Oh my Dolly,” cried he, “ we are very cruel to
“ each other ; but I am most to
“ blame : can you pardon me, my
“ dearest : say you can ; ‘ alas, I
“ know I do not deserve it.”

Dolly’s heart was so oppressed, that she was not able to speak ; but she held out her hand to her young lover, who seizing it eagerly, pressed it to his lips, “ Yes, I will love
“ you.”

“ you,” said he, “ though you
“ should hate me; I will love you
“ to my latest breath.”

Dolly perceiving Sophia and her sister coming up to them, drew away her hand hastily; but looked on him at the same time, with inexpressible tenderness: Sophia told him with a smile, that she was afraid his aunt would be impatient: upon which he made his bow, and hastened back to her.



C H A R

C H A P. XVI.

Dolly concludes her Story.

FANNY now left her sister alone with Miss Darnley, who perceiving that she had been weeping, asked her tenderly the cause. " Oh my dear miss, said the poor girl blushing and pressing her hand, if I had but a little of your prudence and good sense, I should obey my father better ; but when one has once given one's heart, it is very difficult to recal it."

" Very true, my dear," said Sophia ; " therefore one ought not to be in haste to give it."

" I hope," interrupted Dolly with an anxious look, " you have observed nothing in Mr. William to make you change your good opinion of him."

" Quite

“ Quite the contrary,” said So-
 phia, “ I believe him to be a good,
 “ and I am sure he is a sensible
 “ youth: nay more, I believe he
 “ has a sincere regard for you ; and
 “ that,” pursued she, sighing, “ is
 “ saying a great deal, considering
 “ what reason I have to judge un-
 “ favourably of men : but, my
 “ dear, I would have you keep
 “ your passion so far subjected to
 “ your reason, as to make it not
 “ too difficult for you to obey your
 “ father, if he is fully determined to
 “ refuse his consent. I know,” added
 she, with a gentle smile, “ That it
 “ is easier to be wise for others
 “ than for ourselves ; but I know it
 “ is not impossible for a heart in love
 “ to follow the dictates of reason :
 “ I think so highly of Mr. Law-
 “ son’s understanding and goodness,
 “ that I am persuaded he would
 “ not lay an unreasonable command
 “ upon

“ upon you, and by what I could
“ collect from some hints dropt
“ by Mrs. Gibbons, and the little
“ discourse I had with your lover,
“ the old gentlewoman is wholly to
“ blame.”

“ Did Mr. William tell you,”
said Dolly, “ what was the occasi-
“ on of their quarrel.”

“ No,” replied Sophia: “ I
“ should be glad to hear it from
“ yourself.”

“ Well,” resumed Dolly, “ tak-
“ ing her under the arm, let us go
“ to our dear oak then, and there
“ we shall be out of sight; but I
“ am impatient to know how you
“ met, and what conversation you
“ had.” Sophia satisfied her curi-
osity, diverting herself a little with
the old lady’s hard words, and her
strict regard to ceremony.

“ Ah,” said Dolly, “ it was
“ those hard words, and the clut-
“ ter

“ ter she made about ceremony and
“ decorum, that occasioned all our
“ unhappiness ; for as I told you,
“ miss, she was well enough pleas-
“ ed with her nephew’s choice,
“ saying, that he was in the right
“ to marry like a gentleman, and
“ prefer person and breeding to
“ money : however, soon after she
“ came into the country, she shew-
“ ed herself a little dissatisfied with
“ my education, and said, that as
“ my father was a gentleman and a
“ scholar, he ought to have taught
“ his daughters a little Greek and
“ Latin, to have distinguished them
“ from meer country girls.”

“ Your mother, I suppose,”
said Sophia, “ laughed at this no-
“ tion.”

“ It does not become me,” said
Dolly, to blame my mother ; “ but
“ to be sure she took great delight
“ in ridiculing Mrs. Gibbons : in-
“ deed

“ deed it was scarce possible to
“ help smiling now and then at her
“ hard words, and her formal po-
“ liteness ; but my mother, as Mr.
“ William often told me with
“ great concern, carried her raillery
“ so far that his aunt would cer-
“ tainly be offended with it at last ;
“ and so indeed she was, and grew
“ every day cooler, with regard to
“ the marriage. This disgusted
“ my mother more, so every thing
“ wore a melancholy appearance :
“ at length Mrs. Gibbons broke
“ out one day violently, upon my
“ mother’s sending a dish of tea to
“ another gentlewoman before her.
“ I saw a storm in her countenance,
“ and dreading the consequence, I
“ made haste to carry her, her dish
“ myself, but she refused it scorn-
“ fully, and then began to attack
“ my mother in her strange lan-
“ guage, upon her want of breed-
“ ing.

“ ing, and ignorance of the rules
 “ of *precedency*, that was her
 “ word. My mother at first only
 “ laughed, and rallied ; but when
 “ the rest of our visitors was gone,
 “ and Mrs. Gibbons only remained,
 “ the quarrel grew serious. My
 “ mother, who was out of patience
 “ with her folly, said some severe
 “ things, which provoked Mrs. Gib-
 “ bons so much, that she rose up
 “ in a fury, and declared she would
 “ never more any have *collection* with
 “ such vulgar creatures. At that
 “ moment, my father and Mr. Wil-
 “ liam, who had been walking to-
 “ gether, came into the room :
 “ they both were excessively sur-
 “ prised at the disorder which ap-
 “ peared among us : and poor Mr.
 “ William, who was most appre-
 “ hensive, turned as pale as death :
 “ he gave me a melancholy look, as
 “ fearing what had happened, and
 “ had

“ had scarce courage enough to ask
“ his aunt what was the matter?
“ Mean time, my mother, in a
“ laughing way gave my father an
“ account of what had happened,
“ repeating some of Mrs. Gibbons’s
“ strange words, and made the
“ whole affair appear so ridiculous,
“ that Mrs. Gibbons in a great fu-
“ ry, flung out of the house, de-
“ claring that from that moment
“ she broke of any *treatise* of mar-
“ riage between her nephew and
“ me; and that if he continued to
“ make his addressees to me, she
“ would make a will, and leave all
“ her money to a distant relation.
“ Mr. William was obliged to fol-
“ low his aunt; but he begged my
“ father’s leave to return as soon as
“ he had seen her safe home. When
“ he came back, he implored my
“ father, with tears in his eyes, not
“ to forbid his seeing me: he said
“ the

“ the loss of his aunt’s fortune
“ would give him no concern if he
“ durst hope that it would make
“ no alteration in my father’s reso-
“ lutions, since his own little in-
“ heritance was sufficient to main-
“ tain us comfortably. My father
“ was pleased with his generous af-
“ fection for me, and said a great
“ many obliging things to him, as
“ did my mother likewise : so that
“ we thought our misfortune not
“ so bad ; but the next day old far-
“ mer Gibbons came plodding to our
“ house, and with a great deal of con-
“ fusion and awkwardness, told my
“ father that he was very sorry for
“ what had happened ; but sister had
“ changed her mind, and would not
“ let her nephew marry, and he
“ was afraid if he disobliged her
“ she would leave all her money to
“ strangers ; so he begged him to
“ give his son no encouragement,
“ but

“ but to tell him plainly he must
“ obey his aunt and his father ;
“ and he said he was sure his son
“ would mind what my father said
“ to him more than any body else.”

“ I am in pain for poor Mr.
“ Lawfon,” said Sophia. “ What
“ a boorish speech was this !”

“ My father,” resumed Dolly,
“ said afterwards, that if it had not
“ been for the concern he felt for
“ me and Mr. William, he should
“ have been excessively diverted
“ with the old man’s simplicity ;
“ but he answered him gravely, and
“ with great civility : he promised
“ him that the affair should go no
“ farther ; that I should receive no
“ more visits from his son ; and
“ that he would talk with him,
“ and endeavour to make him sub-
“ mit patiently to what his father
“ and his aunt had determined for
“ him. The old man thanked my
“ fa-

“ father a thousand times over for
“ his kindness, and after a great
“ many bows and scrapes he went
“ away. My father was as good
“ as his word : he laid his com-
“ mands on me to think no more
“ of Mr. William, and forbid me
“ to see or speak to him ; and when
“ Mr. William came next, he took
“ him with him into his study, and
“ talked to him a long time. He
“ acknowledged that Mr. William
“ had oftener than once moved
“ him even to tears ; but for all
“ that he did not relent, and we
“ were not allowed so much as to
“ speak to each other alone, for
“ fear we should take any measures
“ to meet in private. This I thought
“ very severe,” pursued Dolly, sigh-
ing, “ we might at least have
“ been indulged in taking leave,
“ since we were to be separated
“ for ever.”

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“ I can-

“ I cannot blame your father,”
said Sophia, “ he was indispensably
“ obliged to act as he did : it is to
“ be wished, indeed, that Mrs.
“ Lawson had passed over the poor
“ woman’s follies with more tem-
“ per ; but this cannot be helped
“ now : perhaps I may be able to
“ serve you. The old gentlewo-
“ man seems to have taken a liking
“ to me ; I shall endeavour to im-
“ prove it, that I may have an op-
“ tunity to soften her : it is not im-
“ possible but this matter may end
“ well yet.”

C H A P.

C H A P. XVII.

*Mrs. Darnley and Harriot resolve
to visit Sophia.*

POOOR Dolly was ready enough to admit a hope so pleasing, and felt her heart more at ease than it had been a long time. As for William, his aunt's extravagant praises of Sophia, and some expressions which she dropped, intimating that she should be pleased if he could make himself acceptable to so fine a lady, hinted to him a scheme which might afford him the means of seeing his mistress sometimes : he seemed therefore to listen with satisfaction to these dark overtures made by his aunt, and upon her speaking still plainer, he said it would be presumption in him to think that a

L 2

young

young lady so accomplished as Miss Darnley would look down upon him ; and besides, he had no opportunity of improving an acquaintance with her, being forbid Mr. Lawson's house, at her request.

The old woman, pleased to find he made so little opposition to her desire, told him, “ That he would
“ have opportunities enough of see-
“ ing and conversing with the
“ lady ; she often walks out,
“ said she, either in the forest
“ or the fields about the house :
“ cannot you throw yourself in her
“ way, and accost her politely, as
“ you very well know how ; and,
“ to *felicitate* your success, I will
“ let her know that I am willing to
“ receive the honour of a visit from
“ her, though this is against all the
“ rules of decorum, for it is my
“ part to visit her first, she being
“ the

“ the greatest stranger here : you
 “ shall deliver my message to her
 “ to-morrow yourself.”

The youth replied, coldly, “ that
 “ it was possible he might not meet
 “ with her to-morrow : neverthe-
 “ less, he would go every day to the
 “ forest, and wherever it was likely
 “ she would walk, in hopes of see-
 “ ing her.”

Mrs. Gibbons, exulting in the
 hope of mortifying Mrs. Lawson,
 told her nephew, “ That if he
 “ could succeed in his addresses to
 “ miss Darnley, and give her so fine
 “ a lady for a niece, she would set-
 “ tle the best part of her fortune on
 “ him immediately.”

William suffered her to please
 herself with these imaginations, hav-
 ing secured the liberty of going un-
 suspected, and as often as he pleas-
 ed, to those places where he could
 see his beloved Dolly ; hitherto he

L 3 had

had not dared to indulge himself frequently in these stolen interviews, lest his aunt being informed of them should take measures to engage Mr. Lawson to keep his daughter under a greater restraint; but now he continually haunted the park, the wood, and the fields about Mr. Lawson's house: here he could not fail of often seeing his mistress, and sometimes of speaking to her unobserved by any one.

Dolly never failed to chide him as often as this happened, for thus laying her under a necessity of disobeying her father's injunctions; but she took no pains to shun those places where she was almost sure of meeting him; and her chiding was so gentle, that he was convinced she was not greatly offended.

Sophia happening to meet him

one morning, while he was thus sauntering about, she enquired for his aunt, and hearing from him how desirous the old gentlewoman was of seeing her, she who was full of her benevolent scheme, and eager to put it in execution, delayed her visit no longer than till the afternoon.

Mrs. Gibbons considered this as a proof of her nephew's sincerity, and was in so good a humour, that she listened without any signs of displeasure, to the praises which Sophia artfully introduced of Dolly; and even sometimes joined in them.

Sophia thought this a very favourable beginning, and went away full of hope that she should succeed in her design: but while she was thus endeavouring to make others happy, her sister was preparing a new mortification for her.

Sir Charles continued to visit
Mrs.

Mrs. Darnley as usual : he passed some hours every day at her house, and while he applauded himself for the steadiness of his resolution, not to follow his mistress, he perceived not his own weakness in seeking every alleviation of her absence. He went to the house where she had formerly dwelt, because every object he saw in it brought her dear idea to his mind : he loved to turn over the books he had seen her read, to sit in those places where she used to sit : he was transported when he saw any thing that belonged to her ; and when he was not observed by the inquisitive eyes of Harriot, he indulged his own in gazing upon Sophia's picture, faintly as it expressed the attractive graces of the original : he endured the trifling discourse of Mrs. Darnley, and the insipid gaiety of Harriot, and left all other
com-

company and amusements to converse with them, that he might hear something concerning Sophia ; for he had the art, without seeming to design it, to turn the discourse frequently upon her, and thus drew from the loquacious mother all he desired to know, without appearing to be interested in it.

Mrs. Darnley knew not what judgment to form of his assiduity in visiting her, and vainly endeavoured to penetrate into his views. As for Harriot, who had no idea of those refinements of tenderness, which influenced Sir Charles's conduct on this occasion, she concluded that her charms had once more enslaved him, and exulted in her fancied conquest the more, as it was a triumph over her sister, who had been the occasion of so many mortifications to her.

Nothing is so easy or so fallacious
as

as the belief that we are beloved and admired ; our own vanity helps the deceit, where a deceit is intended : and a coquet who has a double portion of it, willingly deceives herself.

Harriot was now fully persuaded that Sir Charles had forgot Sophia, and was wholly devoted to her. Impatient to insult her with the news of his change, she proposed to her mother to make her a visit : Mrs. Darnley immediately consented, not because she was very desirous to see her daughter, but because every thing that wore the face of amusement was always acceptable to her. Sir Charles, upon being made acquainted with their intention, offered to accommodate them with his chariot ; and although he only desired them coldly to present his compliments to Sophia, yet when he reflected that they

they would soon see and converse with her, he could not help envying their happiness; and it was with great difficulty he conquered himself so far as to forbear going with them.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.



